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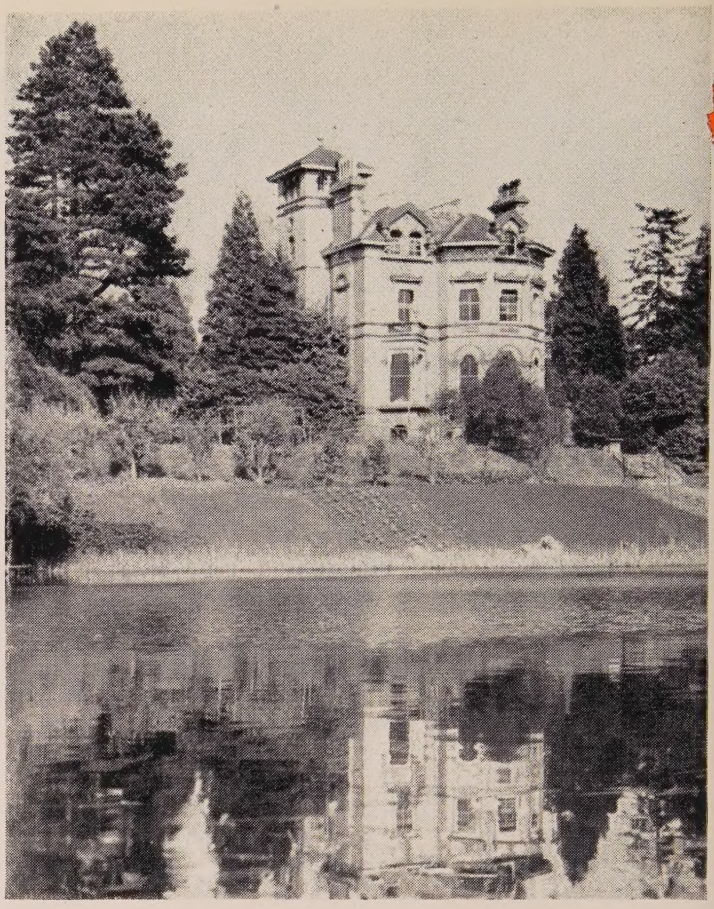

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February 1952 Vol. 3. No. 2

Dance and Dancers

Editor: PETER WILLIAMS *Assistant Editor:* CLIVE BARNES

WORLD'S LARGEST NET SALE IN THE FIELD

WHAT a lot of ruffled feathers! Tyrone Guthrie started it, in the *News Chronicle* on January 9, Pendennis in the *Observer* took it up, Alan Dent in the *News Chronicle* on January 29 added comic relief. Their theme—ballet in England, of which we are said to have had a surfeit, is virtually finished.

Mr. Guthrie himself has had quite a lot to do with the remarkable ascendancy of ballet in these islands but now he appears to want to write it off. He declares that ballet's influence has begun to wane because we have absorbed what it has to offer and nothing new is being presented.

Pendennis carrying the whole thing a stage further thinks that our reputation rests more and more on the classical ballet and the renown of two dancers—Fonteyn and Shearer. He also predicts that ballet in the provinces is in for a sticky time.

As these two gentlemen seem to walk hand-in-hand they had better be answered together. Now it is perfectly true that ballet has not been packing them in recently as, for instance, it did two and three years ago. In those days, and this goes for the theatre in general, we were living in a false paradise. People looked to the theatre, and to ballet in particular, for relief and escape from the tragedy of the past twelve years. Good, bad, and indifferent spectacles managed to coin in money—the whole situation was false and dangerous. The economically straitened and more knowledgeable public are putting things into their right perspective. The recent failure of Original Ballet Russe was proof of this. Here was a company trying to reproduce a once fabulous repertoire not in the manner that these works were created. A sprinkling of good dancers, an inferior orchestra, disruption in the direction, could not make a second Russian steam-roller. The public sensed this and went flocking to Covent Garden and the Cambridge Theatre instead. But ballet now has its roots too deeply embedded in our soil for the sturdy flower to fade away and die. The silly period is mercifully passing, but the peak has yet to be reached.

There is always this insistence from various quarters that there is nothing new—well, there never has been. At various stages of history people dig up some old idea and try to fool everyone with claims of it being a new trend or idea. These eruptions only occur a few times in a century and it is doubtful whether we can expect any great ballet novelty for some years. But years such as the last cannot be accused of complete bareness—look at Ashton's *Daphnis and Chloe*, or Cranko's *Harlequin in April*, not to mention a few fragments from Ballet Workshop. So let us strive to maintain the highest standard of the old and if we can add something, however small, then we shall still be progressing.

Our reputation may rest on classical ballet, but this seems no cause for despondency. More people crowd into the National Gallery than snuggle into those more intimate galleries where modern painters are displayed. The Old Vic (Mr. Guthrie's theatre) and the Stratford Memorial Theatre do pretty brisk business when they reveal the great classics of drama. Neither of these facts impede, in any way, the creation of modern works; on the contrary, they foster and encourage appreciation and understanding of everything which is done today.

It is only when the classics hinder any form of progress that they become a menace. As far as ballet is concerned there is little fear of this happening.

Is there a reliance on stars? Yes, of course there is, and it is perfectly right. In England we have a Royal family, they are the people we look up to, respect, and try to model our own lives on; overseas they are a symbol of all that is right and good in these islands. In ballet it is the same thing, we have our Markovas and Fonteyns and they represent the highest ideal which every dancer hopes to attain. People who start to expound on the beauties of a starless sky are merely making excuses for the resultant drabness. The renown of Fonteyn and Shearer is unquestioned and it is in no way belittling these two great artists to say that all those who saw the recent revival of *The Sleeping Beauty* at Covent Garden were aware that we now have several stars in our firmament.

Provincial audiences are no longer the poor relations, they too are beginning to know the answers. The phrase "good enough for the provinces" is completely out of date. They expect, demand, and deserve the best. Not even on a Saturday night will bad ballet satisfy them, but when something is good there is not the slightest fear of empty houses.

The whole state of the theatre is too difficult at the moment for people to make damaging statements about any one branch of it. Everything that goes on behind the footlights is too much entangled for them not to all fall together—but they will not fall. (*Continued on opposite page.*)

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ALAN DENT, a critic for whom I have always had the highest regard, has chosen to take the words of another critic out of context and quote them. Let us see what Mr. Dent has to say.

He declares that he is a theatre critic and that he would hate even once in his career to be taken for a ballet critic as they are the most humourless and intense of all practitioners of the critical craft. "The art of ballet," he says, "brings to the mind exactly as much as the art of the confectioner brings to the body. No more, no less. Grown-ups who are too fond of ballet become pampered, fractious, and silly, like children who have access to too many sweets and ices. The regular and insatiable supporters of ballet are people too sluggish of intellect to listen to a play on the one hand, and too devoid of imagination to listen to fine music without accompanying action, on the other." He later states that *Sleeping Beauty* at Covent Garden is like a marzipan-covered cake or a pound of Turkish delight, and that Katherine Dunham's dancers are like the same amount of liquorice allsorts. Compared to this, and here I entirely agree with Mr. Dent, we critics must appear humourless and intense.

Cover Stories

To celebrate the return of Margot Fonteyn to Covent Garden, our front cover, by Roger Wood, shows her in the title role of Ashton's *Tiresias*. She will again dance this on February 19.

MARGOT FONTEYN, like the other great English ballerina, Alicia Markova, has developed naturally and gradually to her full meridian. Born at Reigate in 1919 she went to her first dancing school at the age of four. In 1927 her family moved to Shanghai where she continued her studies. During the latter part of her six years in the Far East she was taught by George Goncharov (recently a teacher at the Sadler's Wells School). On her return to England, Fonteyn went to Astafieva who had also taught Markova and Dolin. In 1934 she joined the Vic-Wells Ballet school and very soon she was taking small roles notably that of the young Master of Tregennis in de Valois' *Haunted Ballroom*. When Markova left the company in 1935 it was necessary for somebody to take her place. Fonteyn was now ripe to fill that gap and she took over most of the classical roles. In 1936, Ashton created, specially for her, the principal role in *Apparitions* and from then on he has created roles for her that have fitted her gradual development. Today she is the first completely English-trained *ballerina assoluta* to receive the acclaim of the entire world.

The back cover of Lenwood Morris, Maitre de ballet and principal dancer of Katherine Dunham's company, is also by Roger Wood.

AT an early age, Lenwood Morris ran away from home. He left Philadelphia for Los Angeles where he worked in a hotel. He had always been interested in dancing and when Katherine Dunham was in Hollywood in 1943, he joined her company. Since then he has become one of her principal dancers and also Maitre de ballet. His most important numbers in the present show being King Zombie in *L'Ag' Ya*, and as a carnival dancer in *Frevo*.

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ANTON DOLIN'S PAGE

Monte Carlo Return

Anton Dolin watching Natalie Krassovska rehearse in Monte Carlo. When Markova unfortunately had to leave on account of her foot, Krassovska took over most of her roles. She was particularly successful in Giselle *and also in the* Don Quixote pas de deux. *This latter she danced with Oleg Briansky who also scored one of the great hits of the season.*

For the first time since I started this series of articles, I am asking permission, and getting it, to write about my company Festival Ballet and also, I am afraid, about myself.

YESTERDAY, January 28, I received a telegram from your Editor which arrived following the final Gala performance at the Opera House in Monte Carlo. I had hoped that for one week I could get away from the turmoil, the everlasting worries that, alas, unavoidably seem to be part of the responsibility of an Artistic Director. So here I am on my way to St. Moritz, recalling, instead of forgetting, the past five hectic, exciting, and at moments for me especially, wretched weeks.

On December 22, I arrived back in London from New York in the early hours of the morning. The journey had been pretty ghastly by air with a hold-up of 36 hours in Montreal. One plane failed to leave the ground, the next took off in a blinding blizzard and a temperature of four degrees below zero. Believe me, I felt very little like having to appear as The Nutcracker Prince three days later in Monte Carlo.

I knew I was in no mental or, far more important, physical form to do so. Before bidding *au revoir* to Markova who was leaving early Saturday morning by air, I told her of my decision. After a hectic Saturday in London and Brighton, where I had to go and see my production of *Where the Rainbow Ends*, I flew to Nice on the Sunday. Then on to the lovely little Principality which boasts such a perfect Opera House and such ideal conditions under which to work and rehearse.

Inauspicious opening

The season opened with a flat and uninspired performance of *Nutcracker*. Alicia brought, as always, a lovely rare radiance and starry quality to the Snowflakes scene. As the gauze curtain rose, disclosing her in her blue-white tutu, my hands responded joyously with others in the packed theatre. Seconded by the far more important fact that she was back again dancing after her enforced, and for us, more than sad, absence of three months with a badly torn foot ligament.

Her dancing was as ever light and ethereal. It was restrained and careful. Lovely as it was to watch her, regretting that I was not taking part in the opening performance, I felt far from happy when the curtain fell at the end of the first act. The snow that fell somehow failed to glisten and the atmosphere was damp.

Of course I was back-stage during the interval. Alicia seemed all right though she decided to cut the famous variation for the Sugar Plum Fairy and only do the *Adagio* and *Coda* in the last act. This meant that the Prince's solo also had to be cut. The audience in Monte Carlo particularly appreciate and demand these solo moments. However, much as I regretted this last minute change, though admittedly Alicia had prepared me for it, there was no alternative. It had never been her habit to disappoint her adoring public.

The Danube flows

The curtain was already up on the second act when I resumed my seat at the back of the theatre. I sensed already an apathetic audience. Not until Trunoff bounded on to the stage in his *Gopak* costume, with a shining new white and gold hat, and dancing magnificently, did the audience really respond. Now I felt better and at ease, the ground was prepared for Markova and her partner. Again I was to see my favourite adagio danced as only she can when at the top of her form.

The cutting of the two solos was an audible and obvious disappointment and the *Coda* fell flat. Not even Gilpin seemed at ease in his series of *double tours*. The curtain fell following the final *Valse des fleures* and Markova was surrounded by flowers, one lovely basket towering above her small slim form. She took her calls, her partner by her side.

The habitual long interval followed (this gives some of the audience time to gamble) and *Beau Danube*, brightly lit and with beautiful new and fresh costumes, saved the evening and brought it to a nearly triumphant end. Krassovska, making her first appearance in Monte Carlo after many years, never looked lovelier or danced better. Gilpin looked happy and at ease and everyone in the audience seemed glad to welcome him back in his Massine role of the Hussar which he had danced during our previous season in Monte Carlo.

The usual theatre parties followed the performance though I felt far from happy and not able to participate in true party spirit. Alicia had her table with friends at *Chez Pierre*. I joined her for a while leaving later to talk to my manager about future programmes, decisions, and rehearsals of the new Ashton ballet.

Two days later, just before the second performance, in which she was not dancing, Alicia had to leave Monte Carlo. Her foot was bad again and it needed immediate care by her specialist in London. A surely unhappy beginning to the season.

Splendours and miseries

The second performance included *Swan Lake*. Usually Krassovska danced it beautifully but on this occasion it did not "jell". To get my stage legs in form, I thought it a good idea to partner her in this, one of my favourite ballets.

Not even my well-known, and I admit it, stage-craft could get her a second call after the *adagio*. I was told afterwards that she was tense and nervous. She perhaps conveyed both to the more than knowledgeable and discriminating audience. However, I was glad to have put my feet again on the stage and I felt more in form, as I had been able to take four good classes.

The dances from *Prince Igor* ended the evening in a real sincere and honest success. The whole company led by Trunoff, seconded by Anita Landa and our lovely Diphne Dale, were suberb. The fine chorus of the Monte Carlo Opera were inspired. We had *arrived* for the second time in Monte Carlo. "London's Festival Ballet" and the dance capital of the world could have been proud of us, as were the large English contingent already in Monte Carlo. But my worries had just begun.

Telegrams to London, telegrams from London, and these were followed by doctor's reports that our star would not be able to dance in Monte Carlo and probably not anywhere for at least three more long and weary months. The curtain had to go up. Neither the artistic direction of the Opera House, Dr. Braunsweg, nor myself wished or advocated a change of programme. The ballets, not the artists, are announced in the advance publicity by the Casino. And people motoring from far and wide to see, say, *Les Sylphides* expect to see *Les Sylphides* and not another ballet in its place.

The *Don Quixote pas de deux* had to be given and so for the first time Krassovska was to be my partner. The rehearsals had their amusing moments and their difficult ones. Krassovska seemed more intent upon rehearsing the opening flick of her fan, before the solo, than anything else. In the course of which, three pretty and expensive fans were debited to the cost of the company. I was nervous and danced my solo disgracefully. Following Krassovska's big success in her variation, I pulled myself up, together we "got away" with the *coda*, and ended with a good and perhaps justified success though far from merited from my side.

How the company eventually triumphed over all these difficulties will be told in Mr. Dolin's next article.

PERSONALITIES OF THE MONTH

Two brace of birds

Paula Hinton in Coq d'Or *(Photo: Paul Wilson)*

THE GOLDEN COCKEREL

A FANFARE, the spotlight illuminates a glittering gold bird and Fokine's *Coq d'Or* starts on its journey into a fantastic never-never land which, at moments, comes uncomfortably near to reality. The symbolic creature, who crows at the sight of the approaching enemy, is of great importance to the ballet. It is a role needing a peculiar brilliance with which not many dancers are endowed.

Before the war, Riabouchinska made the role something of her own. In those days the de Basil company was of such a strength that the Cockerel never quite dominated the scene in the manner which Fokine must have intended. Riabouchinska was very good but she was apt to give the impression of a small girl at a fancy-dress party, a feeling that may have been brought about by her immortal association with the role of The Child in Massine's *Jeux d'Enfants*.

The recent performances of the revived Original Ballet Russe did not reveal a great number of outstanding dancers. This might have been the reason for Paula Hinton's Golden Cockerel being one of the most memorable characterisations of the season. On the other hand, Hinton has proved with every role she has undertaken with each of the several companies in which she has recently appeared, that she has a sense of characterisation and drama almost unheard of in English dancers. Remember her Antonia with the Rambert Ballet, her Queen of the Wilis and Polovtsian Girl with Festival Ballet, her Hunted Woman in *La Damnée* for Les Ballets des Champs Elysées? All roles which left an indelible impression on the spectator.

She made the Cockerel inhuman, cold, avian, with that underlying cruelty which a bird who pecks a King to death could only have. Her variation in the first scene had the hard precision of a pair of scissors.

That she has left England temporarily, to work in Australia with Walter Gore for the National Ballet, is going to leave a gap which will be hard to fill.

THE GOLDEN EAGLE

IF you were to ask anyone who saw the pre-war performances of Ram Gopal what they remember most, the answer will invariably be—the Golden Eagle. The flight of this celestial bird, a solo from a sixteen-hour Kathakali dance drama, came as something new in exoticism to the London audience.

Ram Gopal as the Golden Eagle (Photo: Angus McBean)

Since the war, Ram Gopal has danced with his company all over Europe. His several seasons in London and his extensive tours of the English provinces have been entirely responsible for the understanding we have acquired of Indian dancing.

Now he has entered a new field and those golden wings are momentarily stilled. He is acting a straight role in a film in which he does not dance. As the Indian manager of a plantation in *White Blood* (with Claudette Colbert and Jack Hawkins), he is taking his new work very seriously. He did a test which proved to be most successful. Who knows but that one day he may realise his ambition to star in a film with Greta Garbo. But let us hope that his film career does not keep him away from the dance for too long.

Brian Shaw and Rowena Jackson in the Bluebird pas de deux *from the last act of the Tchaikovsky-Petipa* Sleeping Beauty. *This used to be the only* pas de deux, *in the entire work, in which the male dancer had any chance to shine, in fact it is almost the only one in all classical ballet in which the male is virtually dominant. (Photo: Carl Perutz-Magnum)*

TWO BLUEBIRDS

ENGLISH Bluebirds, as a whole, have not been too kindly treated by the critics. In the background there has always been the spectre of Russian dancers and of Jean Babilée. The famous *pas de deux* from the last act of *Sleeping Beauty* is the one in which most people gauge the male strength of any company.

In recent months, John Gilpin has fluttered beautifully with Markova for Festival Ballet. Now the Sadler's Wells Ballet have a pair with whom it would be hard to find much fault. Brian Shaw's variation was one of the most encouraging events in the recent performances of *Sleeping Beauty*, which altogether displayed much fine dancing.

Shaw is a little too stocky to fulfil most people's idea of the right physique for the role, but he turns, leaps, and beats with such ease and perfection that this minor defect is soon forgotten.

Rowena Jackson suffers slightly from two things—she is rather too tall for Shaw and interprets the role midway between the Princess (she is supposed to be) and the Bluebird (which Sadler's Wells incorrectly continues to make her). Nevertheless in this, as in everything she does, her growing stature as a dancer is very marked.

So, let nobody say that we have not now hatched a nest of Bluebirds which could stand up to any in the world.

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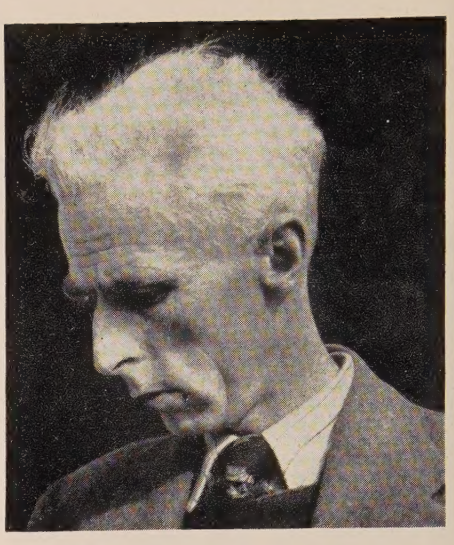
by
Anthony Cowper



John Piper

IN the creative trinity of ballet construction, it is the designer who probably gets the smallest share of the audience's attention and regard. This is as much a pity as it is inevitable. Certainly a good decor will not save a poor ballet (except perhaps on a first night) but it can and does immeasurably enhance the value of good choreography.

Some time ago in DANCE AND DANCERS we published two articles dealing with the fundamental aesthetics of ballet design. Since then we have frequently toyed with the idea of starting an occasional series in these pages given over to certain individual designers. Now, spurred on by the numerous requests of our readers, we have decided to embark on this project.

Normally we will discuss the work of one designer each month, and it seemed appropriate to start with the two artists who have recently been appointed in an advisory capacity to the Sadler's Wells Ballet: John Piper and Sophie Fedorovitch (subject of an article in the near future).

ATMOSPHERIC DESIGNER

PIPER was born in 1903, the son of a solicitor. During his early life his artistic interests were spread out over a number of differing forms, including poetry and music as well as painting. It was not until his father died in 1928, that he commenced his career as a painter.

During his early years as student he supported himself by writing. In 1931 he held his exhibition, followed two years later by his first one-man show.

At this time his painting became influenced by Leger and others, and he turned towards the sternly abstract. In fact, giving up painting altogether for a year he worked on abstract three-dimensional designs made of wood and wire. On his return to painting he continued his search for abstract truth on canvas. This period over, he once more started representational painting.

In 1938 he was commissioned by John Betjeman to produce a guide-book to Oxfordshire, and this started him on the series of paintings of English churches and buildings which later gave him fame.

Also in 1938 he made his first excursion into theatrical design; designing Stephen Spender's verse play *Trial of a Judge* for Unity Theatre.

Piper is a topographical painter of very considerable charm. He is the inheritor of one of the very few worthwhile traditions of British painting. In a comparatively short space of time he has established himself as one of our two or three leading theatrical designers.

In 1943 he designed Ashton's Spenserian ballet *The Quest*. These first designs for the lyric theatre were noteworthy more for their promise than anything else. The last scene depicting the House of Holiness by the lake, a spectral castle beneath a pink sky, was excellent; much of the rest (for example the fiddling detail in the Palace of Pride) was mediocre. Nevertheless Piper was a natural stage-designer, as his later work showed.

At the end of the war came his Old Vic *Oedipus*, a striking conception providing a fine setting for Greek tragedy (incidentally one in sharp contrast, but no less successful, to that devised by his one-time collaborator, Barbara Hepworth). This was followed by *The Rape of Lucretia* and, rather less successfully, *Albert Herring*.

When Miss de Valois decided to revive *Job* at Covent Garden, it was to Piper she went for her designs. Certainly these are more theatrically effective than the somewhat home-spun original designs of Gwendolin Raverat, but it may be felt that, despite their excellence, something of the spirit of Blake has been lost. They possibly owe more to that fine painter Samuel Palmer than to the eccentric poet-prophet whose vision the masque is.

It was perhaps with the two Cranko ballets, *Sea Change* and *Harlequin in April* that Piper unmistakably shouldered his way through to the forefront of his new profession.

Sea Change has a back-cloth of great power, the painting has a Rouault-like texture, while the costumes are pre-eminently suitable for dancing. Here the romantic gloom which surrounds so many of his paintings, is given a more realistic expression, resulting in a brooding, Northern sea-scape.

The tattered glory of his designs for *Harlequin in April*, incorporating the burnt-out richness of a charred theatre (which actually provided the artist's initial inspiration) with a typical Piper "sky of hope", the clever stylisations of *Commedia dell' Arte* costumes, add greatly to the effect of the ballet. Indeed it would be difficult to find a finer modern example of collaboration between choreographer, artist and composer.

His designs for *Simone Boccanegra* (before someone effectively ruined one of the sets) and *Billy Budd* should also be mentioned. In this last his treatment is more realistic than hitherto, and consequently less conceived in the artist's personal idiom. However one set, the excellent skeleton impression of below-decks, is remarkable for its ingenuity. Here, as in the Unicorn head-dresses in *Harlequin*, one may perhaps glimpse the influence of his early work on abstract constructions.

Piper is still young and he obviously has much to offer theatrical design in the future. All his paintings appear to be the background to some spectral story locked in the artist's imagination. Often they remind one of stage-sets before the rise of the curtain. Perhaps it is this quality that makes him one of the finest designers for narrative ballet that this country has yet produced.

The principal scene in Ninette de Valois' Job showing Job's Godhead considering the fallen Satan (Robert Helpmann)
(Photo: Edward Mandinian)

Readers may like to know where, in back numbers, they will find other ballets which Piper has designed—*Sea Change* (March, 1950, page 8, also March, 1951, page 10); *Harlequin in April* (July, 1951, pages 14 and 15).

Peter Daubeny presents—

ROSARIO AND ANTONIO—CHAMPS-ELYSÉES BALLET—PILAR LOPEZ—DE CUEVAS BALLET—MRINALINI SARABHAI—KATHERINE DUNHAM

by

Peter Williams

Peter Daubeny at his desk (Photo: Cecil Beaton)

When Rosario and Antonio opened their first London season at the Cambridge Theatre, on June 14, 1951, the words "Peter Daubeny presents" were seen in lights, and on the programme, for the first time in connection with dancing. From that day to this, he has presented a continuous procession of the most important dance and ballet spectacles to visit this country. The Cambridge Theatre has, after Covent Garden and Sadler's Wells, become the best-known theatre for ballet in London.

THOSE who present entertainments in the theatre frequently come from families with some sort of stage background. Peter Daubeny comes from a military family entirely unconnected with the theatre but for as long as he can remember it has always interested him. When he was still at his Public School, Marlborough, he produced and played the title role in *Richard of Bordeaux*. After that he went to get professional training at the Michel St. Denis school.

There is no doubt that his friendship with famous people of the theatre—Hugh Walpole, Charles Cochran, Noel Coward, and Ivor Novello—has helped his career. But such friendships are of little use unless a person has the ability to use them properly and with the common sense to learn all he can and not push himself.

Man in possession

At seventeen, he went as a student to the Liverpool Repertory company at a time when Ena Burel and Judy Campbell were starting to become names to contend with. At first he understudied various people until one night a principal actor was ill. Peter had to play the lead, a rather experienced lover, in the *Man in Possession*. The fact that he was a young stripling made the situation almost absurd, not much helped by the fact that his dicky shirt popped out. In spite of this, he impressed John Armstrong who then engaged him in the company at £8 a week.

During the war he was an officer in the Coldstream Guards. Having got through the North African campaign, he was seriously wounded in the Solerno landing. This resulted in the loss of an arm. Such a disaster to one so young not unnaturally put him into a bad way for some time—his whole life had to be re-adjusted. While he was in a hospital in Italy, Noel Coward arrived to give a concert and it was this old friend who gave Peter encouragement and help about becoming a theatre manager. Ivor Novello promised to make him the subject of a play—a promise he fulfilled in *We Proudly Present*. Probably more than anyone, these two people helped him to regain his equilibrium.

Harlequin influence

Back in the theatre again, Frederick Lonsdale wrote specially for him the first success he was to present—*But for the Grace of God*. He was now established and the list of plays which followed, with varying degrees of success, do not concern ballet history except to prove his growing entanglement in the theatre.

It was on a visit to the Birmingham Repertory Theatre that he saw a production of Moliere's *Le Malade Imaginaire*, in which mime and dancing were interpolated. He became so fascinated by it with the result that he toured *The Gay Invalid* (as it was renamed), with Elizabeth Bergner in lead, through the provinces until it finally landed at the Garrick Theatre, London. It was a charming production which never achieved the success it deserved. Its importance in Peter's life was that it brought him in touch with Walter Gore who arranged the dances and played Harlequin. Gore, as people who know him well fully realise, can be a great inspiration. From him, Peter learnt many of the mysteries of ballet.

Iberian spell

Since the age of fifteen, he had heard from Charles Cochran of the wonders of Spain and her dances (it may be remembered that every Cochran revue had at least one Spanish number); from Cocky also he learnt most of

(*Continued on page* 23)

Elizabeth Bergner being lifted by the dancers in the Gay Invalid. *It was this production that first aroused Peter Daubeny's interest in ballet. The delightful dances and mime scenes, arranged by Walter Gore, were woven into the plot, making a counter-plot. This practice frequently occurred in the drama of Moliere's time. An article on Gore's contribution to this production will be found on page ten of the April, 1951, issue. From left to right, the dancers are —Anna Macwilliam, Paul Anstee, Elizabeth Bergner and Graham Stark.*

(Photo: Angus McBean)

Vic-Wells Story

by CLIVE BARNES

Being the conclusion of the story behind the Sadler's Wells Theatre which started in last month's issue.

WHEN, in 1929, it was decided that the Old Vic needed to expand, the disused Sadler's Wells Theatre seemed to be the obvious choice. Nevertheless there were many difficulties to be faced.

It needed re-building, and that needed money. An appeal for funds was launched by Lillian Baylis, Ben Greet and Sybil Thorndike. Somehow the money was raised and in 1930 the theatre was re-built, although it still retained some of Rosoman's old structure. The Old Vic organisation was taking an immense chance in becoming the Vic-Wells. If that chance had not been taken we would very possibly have no national ballet, no national opera, and the Wells would probably be a dye-works. A sad death that would have lent itself to puns.

The first night of the new Vic-Wells regime was on January 5, 1931 at the Old Vic. The opera company opened its first season on a full-time basis with *Carmen*. The very next night the Sadler's Wells Theatre was itself re-opened. The first programme started with Joan Cross singing the National Anthem and speeches. The play was *Twelfth Night* with Gielgud as Malvolio and Richardson as Sir Toby. The next morning *The Times* wrote, "one may always know that theatrical history is being made when no one, having entered the theatre, sits". Theatrical history was indeed made on that great occasion. This plain and austere theatre, built in the Twentieth Century municipal style, was destined to become London's "People's Opera House".

Ballet makes a start

It will be oted that at this time plays alternated with opera at the Wells. On January 20 the opera gave its first performance (*Carmen* again) in the new house. A date of considerable importance to the Vic-Wells was April 17 of that same year. On this day the opera company presented Verdi's *Otello* (with Carron, Coates and Cross), the production which established it as an important artistic venture. Also in that programme there crept, almost shyly, a little note announcing that owing to the acquisition of the new premises a Ballet School was being formed.

Dancers had been appearing in operas for some time and on May 5, 1931 the new company gave its first performance at the Old Vic. It was billed as Anton Dolin (big letters) and the Vic-Wells Ballet (small letters). At later performances many guest artists assisted. One is tempted here to embark upon a miniature history of the Sadler's Wells Ballet, but unfortunately this is not the place for such a chronicle, nor is the present writer the person to unfold it. Suffice it to say that for about three years the opera and theatre company played Box and Cox at the Vic and the Wells, with the ballet company being the knobs on the operatic Box.

This two-theatre system was difficult to administrate and was finally discarded. The drama company made its home at the Old Vic, the opera and ballet took up permanent residence at the Wells. (However the title Vic-Wells was not dropped until the early days of the war).

At first and, as far as programme time went, until the war, the ballet was the junior partner at the Wells. Nevertheless it pushed its standards up and up, found Markova, lost Dolin, lost Markova and found Fonteyn. Even at the change of the old order in 1940 the ballet was building up an international reputation which the opera company could not hope to rival. Nevertheless these were years of achievement for both opera and ballet.

The opera firmly established itself, first under the stalwart Corri and Collingwood, and later under Collingwood alone. Productions were varied, general standards were high. *Mastersingers*, *Valkyries*, *Boris Godunov*, *Forces of Destiny* were merely some of the more ambitious productions.

Ninette de Valois' ballet produced the full-length classics and some of Ashton's and de Valois' finest ballets, many of which are still in the repertory. Miss Baylis died at the end of 1937, but her work and policy were continued. In fact, as Edward Dent points out, the period of Baylis administration may be considered as going on up to 1940, when the theatre was evacuated.

Triumph out of war

The war, in many ways, was a lucky thing for the Vic-Wells. At its outbreak Sadler's Wells was seriously in debt. Apparently they were faced with the possibility of closure.

The Sadler's Wells Theatre did not play a very notable part in the last war. It was requisitioned. The opera and ballet companies found a temporary West-End home at first the New Theatre, then the Princes then the New again. They toured the provinces. They played to the troops. The fortunes of the opera after a disastrous start rose again; largely through the untiring efforts of de Valois and Lambert the fortunes of the ballet (cruelly beset as it was by wartime conditions) rose even higher. Both companies emerged from the war triumphant.

In June 1945 the opera returned to Sadler's Wells and presented, amid scenes of wild enthusiasm, Britten's *Peter Grimes*. The ballet also returned for a season, the first ballet season in the theatre's history. The previous December Boosey and Hawkes, the music publishers, had taken the lease of Covent Garden, and rumours were in the air. These rumours materialised when, in February 1946, the ballet company spread its wings and flew to Covent Garden.

The Wells opened its new season in December 1945 with opera. The theatre's position was not a happy one. Not only had one of its companies (the more popular) been whisked off to another place, but the opera company itself split, and the personnel had to be almost entirely re-organised. Also the repertory, in sad shape after the war, had to be built up again. In some ways the theatre was back where it started in 1931. The director had resigned and Clive Carey was left with the rather thankless task of organising the next renaissance. In the following June, Carey left in order to devote his time to teaching and James Robertson replaced him as Director, but the theatre had surmounted its first post-war difficulties. (Later a Committee of Management was appointed, consisting of Norman Tucker, chairman, Michael Mudie and James Robertson).

Fortunately the theatre was well-placed financially. Profits had piled up a little during the war, and it now had—for the first time in its existence—a small State subsidy. The opera company settled down and has been able to show a steady improvement from season to season. Teamwork is now perfect and productions like *Simone Boccadegra*, *Falstaff* and *Katya Kabanova* would be a credit to any opera house.

Second front opens

At the end of 1945, when it was certain that the ballet was going to Covent Garden, the Sadler's Wells Opera (later Theatre) Ballet was formed under the direction of Miss de Valois. At first this appeared with the opera but on April 8, 1946 it gave its first full evening of ballet. "The longer the globe revolves, the less movement we will find on it". Once more history has repeated itself and the ballet company has grown, expanded and is on the point of acquiring an international reputation.

No account of post-war activity at the theatre would be complete without mention of other companies, outside the Wells' organisation, that have occasionally been given hospitality during the summer recess. These have included two seasons by the Ballet Rambert, two seasons by Britten's English Opera Group, a James Bridie play, and the recent season of Spanish dancing given by José Greco's company.

What now? What will happen to the theatre in Rosebery Avenue in the next few years. After a long history it has attained its majority since its renaissance. One would have thought that the theatre was at last firmly established in the nation's musical life, and certainly one hopes that it is. Nevertheless it would not be the Wells not to have its ups and its downs, and at the moment it is facing something very much like a crisis.

Backs to the wall

The strong financial position of 1945 has been lost. Opera and ballet are not an economic proposition. The task of running them at the Wells is made harder by the theatre's charter which only permits very moderate prices to be charged for seats. Also the ballet school and the ballet company, which during its career has, except on tour, only given one or two performances a week, must have run at quite a considerable loss. The Arts Council, and this is not altogether meant as criticism of its policy, has found money to put on plays of occasionally dubious artistic value, has financed Covent Garden on a moderately lavish scale (even this subsidy does not compare with the grant given to the Paris Opera or La Scala), but have not been over-generous to the Wells.

What is to happen? The Wells understandably do not wish to lower the standards they have worked so hard to achieve, but money does not grow on trees—not nowadays. For twenty-one years this theatre has been a home for opera and ballet, but unless money is forthcoming either from a private patron (which is highly unlikely), the national exchequer (which is strained) or a public subscription, the home will almost certainly become cheerless and may even have to close its doors. Must the story of Phelps be retold? Must a further phase of gloomy obscurity follow this further phase of glory? Must the history of this great theatre eternally run in circles? It seems worth thinking over.

Three Caucasian Warriors—Oleg Sabline, Paul Maure, Michel Reznikoff (*Photo: Lido*)

New Ballets

LE PRISONNIER DU CAUCASE

(THE PRISONER IN THE CAUCASUS)

First given by the Grand Ballet du Marquis de Cuevas at the Theatre de L'Empire, Paris, in December, 1951. Ballet based on folklore with choreography by George Skibine after a poem by Alexander Pushkin. Music by Aram Kachaturian (music from the ballet *Gayane*). Arranged and adapted by Nicolas Stein. Decor and costumes by Mitislav and Rostislav Dobujinsky. For the folk dances, Skibine was assisted by Charles Abachidze.

CAST

Scene 1—A Battle in a Mountain Pass

Caucasian Warriors Oleg Sabline, Michel Reznikoff, Paul Maure, José Ferran, Richard Adama, Roland Lorrain, Vladimir Arapoff, Leon de Pian, Stephen Warwick, George Golovine, Daniel Seillier

Russian Warrior .. .. George Skibine

George Skibine as the Russian Warrior (*Photo: Lido*)

Scene 2—The Camp of the Caucasians

Tcherkechenka .. .. Marjorie Tallchief

The Prisoner .. .. George Skibine

The Caucasian Chief .. .. Edward Alexander

Young Girls .. Dolores Starr, Solange Golovina, Olga Maksheeva, Ruth Galene, Michelle Grimault, Monique Bernachova, Joyce Van der Veen

Caucasian Women Tania Karina, Jocelyn Vollmar, Helga Monson, Taina Elg, Héléne Sadovska, Nora de Wal, Maureen Andrews, Nancy Clement, Beatrice Mosena

Scene 3—Near a Caucasian Village

An Eagle .. .. Léon de Pian

Tcherkechenka .. .. Marjorie Tallchief

The Prisoner .. .. George Skibine

THE ballet is based on a popular Russian story. The theme has been used by Leon Tolstoy for a short novel and also by Alexander Pushkin in a poem.

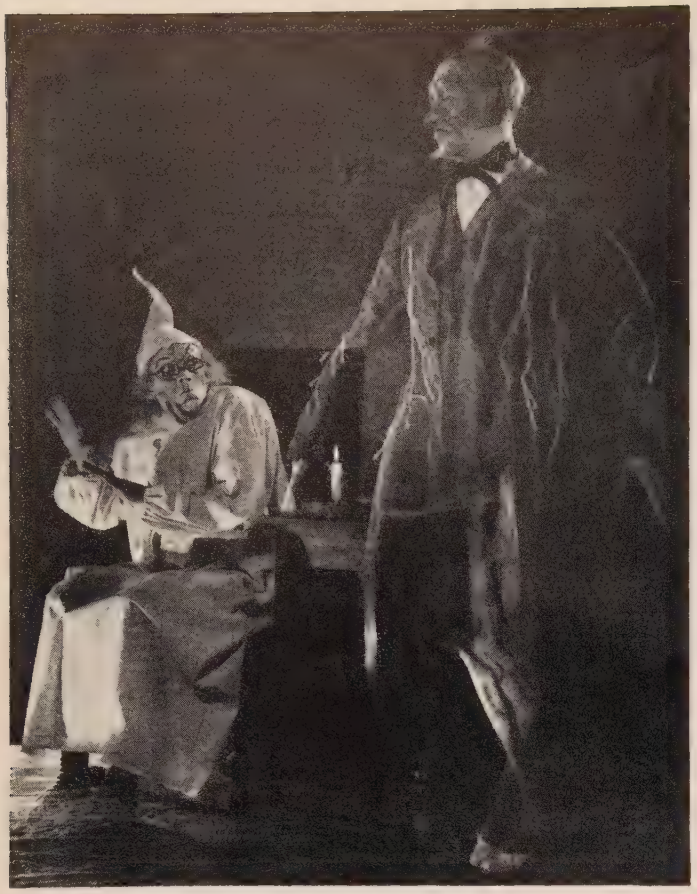
The action takes place during the Russian Caucasian war in the middle of the nineteenth century. During a battle a Russian officer is captured by the Tcherkess (one of the Caucasian nations) and is brought back to their village and made a slave. One of the young Tcherkess girls falls in love with the stranger and helps him to escape. Made desperate by his departure and her own treason, she kills herself.

SKIBINE'S work is a condensed version of a ballet on the same theme which was first given in Leningrad in 1937, with choreography by Lavrovsky, to music by Assafiev. The work then fell into a Prologue, three acts and seven scenes.

The work opened in St. Petersburg during the reign of Alexander I (1801-1825). A ball is in progress to which a young Armenian officer, Bakhmetiev, has come to see the Princess Nina for the last time. She is engaged to a Prince. During the ball a quarrel ensues and Bakhmetiev leaves St. Petersburg for ever.

The scenes in the Caucasus open with the preparations for the wedding of a young Circassian girl who is to marry a stranger from a neighbouring village. The girl cannot conceal her aversion for her fiance and falls in love with a prisoner who has just been brought into the village after a raid on the Russians. From there on, the story continues on the lines of Skibine's version.

Marjorie Tallchief, as Tcherkechenka, surrounded by Caucasian women (*Photo: Lido*)



On Christmas Eve, Scrooge (Alan Carter) is haunted by Marley's ghost (Peter White) *(Photo: Angus McBean)*

Scrooge in his usual bad temper, which is how people knew him before his Christmas Eve dream *(Photo: Angus McBean)*

CHRISTMAS CAROL

First given at the Empire Cinema, Leicester Square, London, on December 17, 1951. Based on the novel by Charles Dickens with choreography by Alan Carter. Music by William Hill-Bowen. Decor and costumes by Nat Karson.

CAST

Scrooge	Alan Carter
Bob Cratchitt	Leo Kersley
Tiny Tim	Grace Greenaway
Mrs. Cratchitt	Moyra Tucker
Cratchitt daughters	Pauline White, Daphne Kirner
Scrooge's nephew	Andre Cordova
The wife of Scrooge's nephew	Josephine Spreckley
Marley's ghost	Peter White
Three spirits	Patricia Garnett, Wendy Hyde, Kathleen Gray
Carol Singers	Members of the Empire Chorus

THE story of the irascible old miser who had a series of dreams on Christmas Eve in which those whom he has ill-treated come and taunt him, has been well condensed into ballet form by Alan Carter. He contrived to retain the kernel of the plot and the work had complete clarity. Without the aid of any programme notes, the plan of Charles Dickens' novel would be clear even to those who are not acquainted with it.

The peculiar style of the nineteenth century author was, by the use of exaggerated and grotesque movement, well realised in terms of choreography. The characters almost appeared to speak in the manner of Dickens.

Carter himself was admirable as Scrooge and his mime was such that it could be understood even at the back of this vast cinema.

Nat Karson designed a most ingenious setting which showed Scrooge's office, a street, and the interior of Scrooge's house, all at the same time. The sooty colour of the houses and the quiet oleograph-like treatment of the whole scene, made a good contrast to the bright colours of the rest of the stage show. The music of William Hill-Bowen consisted mainly of variation on the theme of the carol, "God rest you merry gentlemen". It was eminently suitable for the subject.

Ballet in a super cinema

IT is doubtful whether this work, as it stands, would amount to much in the repertoire of an ordinary ballet company. Though there is no doubt that the ballet could be expanded to advantage with much more made of the dreams of Christmases present and past. It is anyway rather extraordinary that nobody has made more use of Dickens' works as themes for ballet. The main lesson to be learnt from Carter's work is that it fulfilled all that was asked of it in the particular circumstances.

Ballet has rather a struggle in the Empire programmes. Firstly it has to contend with the precision girls, not that there is any rivalry between the two but the very nature of twenty-four beautiful girls doing exactly the same thing has a bull-dozing effect which is hard to contend with.

Secondly, the ballet is not really for the benefit of, what we think of as, a typical ballet audience. The greater majority are there to see the film. Therefore a choreographer can do nothing that slightly smacks of "highbrow". Anyway such a ballet would be lost in the vastness of the theatre.

Thirdly, the fact that the ballet is given four times a day, without a super-abundance of time for rehearsal, means that nothing too complicated or exhausting can be attempted or the dancers would be physical wrecks by the end of the week.

Fourthly, the ballets have to fit into the theme of the programme (time has proved that programmes with a theme are far more successful than those without), which means that the choreographer does not have a free-hand as regards to subject matter.

Critics who adversely criticise these works tend to forget these points; they look on them in the light of a company designed only to present ballets to a ballet audience.

Since Carter has been resident choreographer at the Empire he has created ballets that were good, though occasionally indifferent, but all fulfilled their particular function. With *Christmas Carol* he has done something a little more.

P. W.

DONALD OF THE BURTHENS

A ballet in two scenes by Leonide Massine, based on a Scottish legend. First given by the Sadler's Wells Ballet at Covent Garden on December 12, 1951. Choreography by Leonide Massine; Music by Ian Whyte; Scenery and costumes by Robert Colquhoun and Robert MacBryde.

CAST

Scene I

Donald	Alexander Grant
Death	Beryl Grey
Waulking Song	Deidre Dixon, Brenda Taylor, Meriel Evans, Wendy Winn, Catherine Boulton, Joan Benesh, Anya Linden, Angela Walton, Rosemary Valaire, Mary Drage, Valerie Taylor, Yvonne English
The Mother	Julia Farron
Three Goat Men	Ray Powell, Henry Legerton, Franklin White

Scene II

The King	Leslie Edwards
The King's Guest	Julia Farron
Lament	Christine du Boulay, Diane Forham, Anna Carne, Valerie Taylor, Brenda Taylor, Wendy Winn, June Lesley, Rosemary Valaire, Mary Drage, Catherine Boulton, Yvonne English, Deidre Dixon, Anya Linden, Meriel Evans, Joan Benesh, Angela Walton
Sword Dance	Brian Shaw, Gilbert Vernon, Keith Milland, John Sale, Desmond Doyle, William Barrett, Bryan Ashbridge, Douglas Steuart, Peter Clegg
Four Knights	Donald Barclay, Henry Legerton, Ray Powell, Franklin White
Country Dance	Pauline Clayden, Dorothea Zaymes, Anne Heaton, Jill Gregory
Children	Joan Blakeney, Helen Trevor, Judith Sinclair, Shirley Bateman, Donald Kilgour, David Shields
Porters	Henry Naughton, Colin Worth, Johaar Mosaval, Russell Kerr

The opening of the ballet. Girls dancing the Waulking Song while Donald appears carrying his burden of wood (Photo: Baron)

STORY

Scene I

DONALD was a wood-carrier and so he was known as Donald of the Burthens. One day as he went wearily on his way, he met a stranger who said to him, "Donald, I am Death and if you take service with me, I will make a doctor of you, but on condition that I get you the first time you cheat me."

Donald accepted the condition for he was tired of carrying wood. Then Death said to him, "When you go to a sick man, if you see me standing at his head, do nothing for him, for he shall die; but if I stand at his feet look after him, for he will live." Death also told Donald that he must never pray.

Donald prospered; every man that he said would live, lived, and every one he said would die, died. Amongst others he cured three men, who believed themselves to be goats, also a sick child.

Scene II

One day he was called to the bedside of the King, but he saw Death standing at his head, so he asked for the King's bed to be turned so that his feet were where his head had been. No sooner was this done than the King began to grow better. Then Death crept round to the King's head again, and again Donald told them to turn the bed. This game went on for some time, until Death made off in a passion. The King recovered and there was general rejoicing.

Some school-children entered, who asked Donald to teach them a prayer that they had forgotten. So Donald taught it to them word for word. No sooner had he finished than Death appeared and said, "I have got you now at all events." Donald was mourned by everyone but Death compelled them to dance.

CHOREOGRAPHY

WHAT a very good idea it was to produce a ballet on a Scottish theme! Massine, who is certainly as Scottish as he is Spanish, should have been a perfect choice for the choreography, and few dancers in the Wells company deserve a starring vehicle more than Grey and Grant.

Added to all these pre-curtain virtues was the utilisation in the libretto of the medieval conception of the Dance of Death. What a pity that in ballet good intentions do not always survive the raising of the curtain.

Massine has only himself to blame if his past glory leaves him susceptible to the charge of triviality. He is an unquestioned master of the character ballet, and his work will always be judged not by the standards of the effete productions of his last decade, but by the ballets of his vintage years.

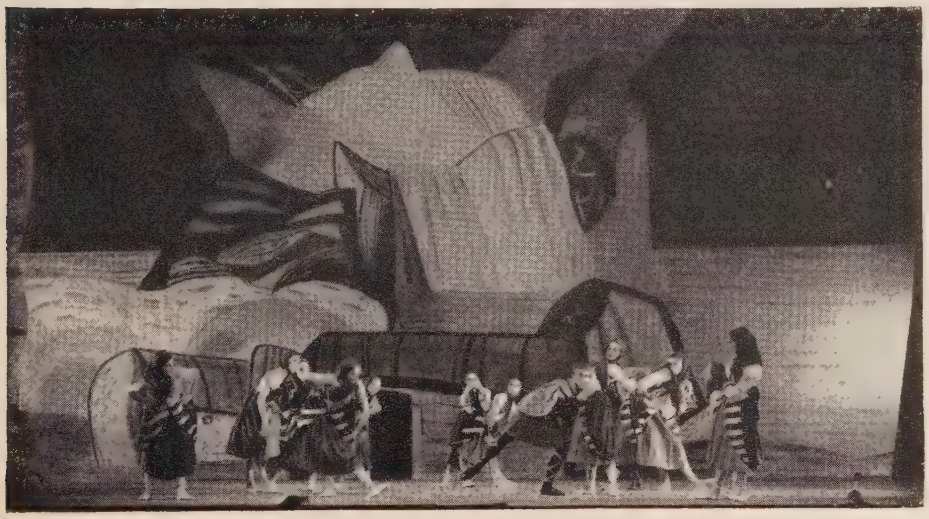
Compared with even the contemporary revival of *The Three-Cornered Hat* (to say nothing of earlier and more illustrious productions outside my experience) *Donald of the Burthens* is regrettably trivial.

The ballet is poorly constructed. It is in two scenes, the first of which is divided into two episodes which together are hardly more than half the length of the final scene.

The first scene is largely taken up with an incomprehensible mime episode, which purports to get the story into action. As this is hopelessly obscure (without, of course, that life-buoy of modern choreographers—the programme note) the ensuing narrative is difficult to follow.

By the time the ballet has got going, in the divertissement danced before the resuscitated King leading to the excellent and exciting Highland-fling finale, it is nearly finished.

The floor-patterns, with their ingenious use of obliquely-placed blocks of dancers and the circular finale, are reminiscent of any Massine ballet.



The Colquhoun-MacBryde decor for the first scene showing Donald being teased by the girls (Photo: Baron)

The drop curtain between the two scenes. Donald having made a pact with Death, becomes a famous doctor. Here, he is about to cure three men (Legerton, Powell and White) who think themselves to be goats. The sky is a pale yellow and the two monoliths are in grey and black. (*Photo: Baron*)

The traditional steps, expertly supervised by John Armstrong and Elma Taylor, seem to have been grafted on to these patterns from without. The result is a fusion never so happy as the union between ballet and Spanish dancing found in *The Three-Cornered Hat*.

Massine has allotted some of the best choreography in the ballet to a group of children. Their "prayer scene" had a pathos that the rest of the ballet conspicuously lacked, and their "follow your leader" jumping entry into the Finale was a fine piece of choreographic craftsmanship.

As a Sassenach it is perhaps dangerous to say what is or what is not specifically Scottish in spirit. However, I would have thought that something of the lustily humorous, macabre element, frequently found in the great Scottish poets, Henreyson and Dunbar, could have resulted in a more theatrical spectacle.

To me, and this is a personal view, the ballet while admirably illustrating the mechanics of Scottish folk-dance, failed to touch off the Scottish genius.

It would be absurd to suggest that any ballet by Massine could ever be less than competent, and perhaps it is ungrateful to expect much more. Most certainly the ballet adds variety to the Wells' repertory, and should be very popular (it received the loudest reception accorded to any new ballet since the war), but whether it will hold a permanent place in the repertory seems a little doubtful.

The company are to be congratulated on the way they absorbed and mastered the entirely new style of dancing expected of them. The sword-dance for nine boys and the country-dance for four girls were particularly well done.

Grey danced superbly as Death, her long, graceful body spinning and twisting tortuously through the ballet's design. Were one to find fault with a very worth-while performance, it would be to wish for a less limited range of facial expression.

Grant's Donald is not such a fine opportunity as the dancer had in *Mam'zelle Angot* or even in *Clock Symphony*. Much of his early dancing is exhausting but unrewarding, and when he comes to his final dance (which should surely, like the Miller's dance, be the climax of the ballet) he seems unable to do himself full justice. The role does not lend itself to very vivid characterisation, however Grant's powerful personality and exceptional vitality can never fail to make a strong impression.

The minor parts were very slight. After a promising entry the dance of the Three Goat Men, very capably performed by Legerton, Powell and Franklin White, faded away to nothing. The opportunity to create an exciting, grotesque character dance, was unaccountably missed. Edwards and Farron, two of the most consistently satisfying dancers in any company, did their customary best to bring their somewhat negative parts to life.

Some of the best dancing in the ballet comes from Shaw. Both in leading the Sword Dance and in the Finale his attack and elevation were outstanding.

Clive Barnes

MUSIC

WHEN you come to boil things down to their essentials, there is only one important thing to be considered about music for the ballet. That is, strangely enough, its fitness—or otherwise—as ballet music.

That is not as straight-forward as it may sound.

Far too many of us are inclined to look at ballet from our own particular little points of view. To the choreographer, the ballet is largely a matter of patterns created out of the vocabulary of the dance, with everything else as merely useful adjuncts. The dancer tends to watch the individual artists and to mutter about muffed turns and bent knees.

And we music critics? Well, you have been reading my strictures on the music of the ballet for some time, and you know what I think about much of it.

But in ballet the whole is always greater than the part; and although my particular job happens to be to listen to the music with more or less trained ears, I cannot sit through a ballet with blinkers on either my eyes or my mind.

To me, then, a ballet is music as far as my subject for writing is concerned. But I cannot help seeing—or rather, experiencing—it as a whole. And in the final judgment, whether the music be good or bad, I cannot help assessing it, not so much as music in itself, but on the basis of fitness for its job.

That is why I would call Ian Whyte's score for Massine's *Donald of the Burthens* one of the most successful ballet scores we have had for some time.

We have had better music for ballet; we have even had great works of music squeezed into

After the King has been cured by Donald, men celebrate the event in a Sword Dance. Brian Shaw is seen centre. (*Photo: Baron*)

After Donald died, he was mourned by everyone but Death compelled them all to dance. The finale with the King and his Guest (Leslie Edwards and Julia Farron) leading the company. Death (Beryl Grey) is dancing with Brian Shaw, right centre. (Photo: Baron)

theatrical corsets to make them suitable for jobs they were not intended to do. We have even had music that was far and away ahead of the ballet as a whole, music that was fine music but which will probably live longer than the ballet and apart from it.

But what ballet needs is music which, at all times, remains part of the composite work; and that is what *Donald of the Burthens* has.

I have written before that the best use of the medium of ballet comes about when all the three factors involved—dance, music and decor—appear to grow from one and the same source: from the theme. Although nobody would pretend that in this case they have grown very far—*Donald* is no work of genius in any direction—at least they are all of a part. And as for the music, if there was nothing very much right with it as music, there was at least nothing very much wrong with it. It did the job it set out to do, unpretentiously and efficiently.

It had imagination, within limits; and it also had scholarship, again within limits. The penultimate fugue, based not only on a melodic theme but also on a complication of rhythmic themes, was a delight to ear and mind. Its one great fault was that towards the end it lacked faith in itself, and had to descend from the realm of music to the realities.

That is not to say that I dislike the bagpipes, as such. They have their place; but that place is not on a stage in association with an orchestra playing in an entirely different scale. If we are going to use bagpipes completely as an accompaniment to ballet, by all means let us use them—a whole pipe band of them if you like. But if we are going to use an orchestra, let us stick to the orchestra, which in any case (at least in a theatre) can sound more like bagpipes than the pipes themselves.

Musically, *Donald of the Burthens* has not taken us very far. But it is a capable job of work, doing what it set out to do, no more and no less. And it has a virtue that might well be pondered by ambitious choreographers and composers—simplicity. **Evan Senior.**

DECOR

THE task of designing an archaic ballet without succumbing to the heaviness and arty-craftiness, which is always inclined to deaden any early British spectacle, is no easy one. One can only commend Colquhoun and MacBryde for avoiding the pitfalls, and designing with a lightness that unfortunately was not always apparent in the choreography.

It is not easy to determine whether the ballet is humorous or semi-tragic and I would say that lack of clarity on this score has rather robbed the ballet of the impact it should have had. The designers seem to have decided on a course half-way between the two. The result is satisfactory and theatrically effective.

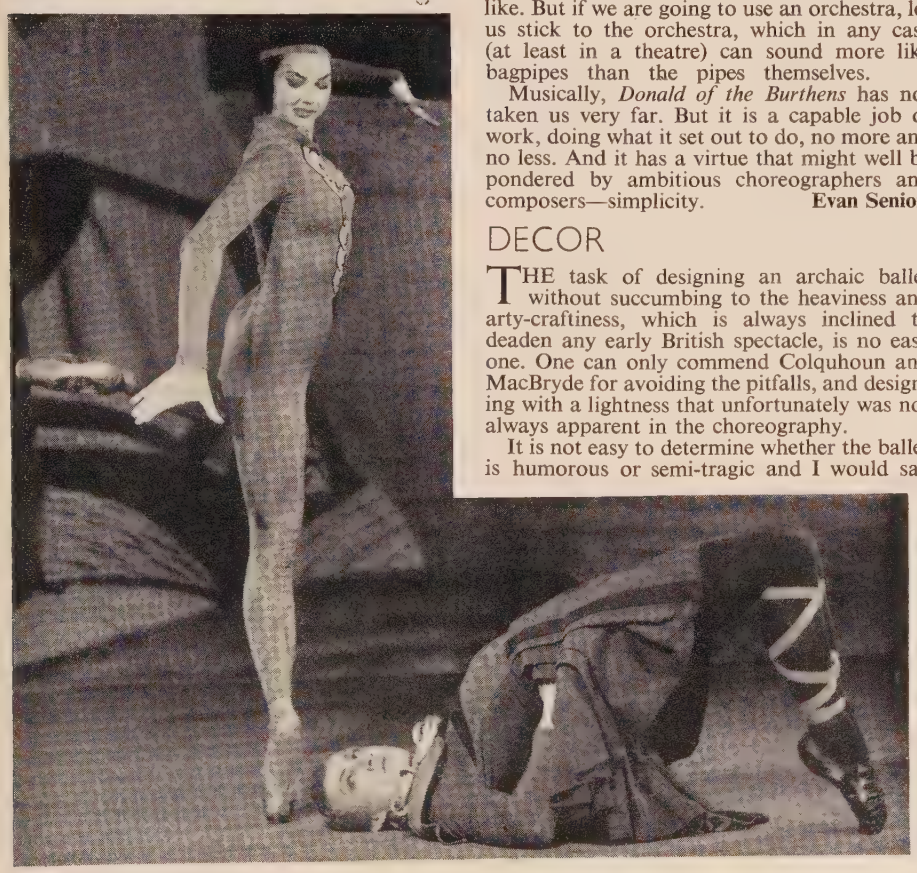
The opening scene is a stylisation of all the things that leap to one's mind when anybody mentions the word "highlands"—sea, rocks, and crofters' cottages. The colours are surprising in their mixture of blues, pinks, mauves and other pale colours, heavily outlined in black. Yet, it immediately creates an atmosphere. The costumes for the girls in the Waulking Song are charming with their striped overskirts—some yellow, some pink, some blue.

The scarlet costume for Death, though effective, seemed at variance with the rest. It was right for the one supernatural figure to be completely different, and the all-over tights are ideal for showing the dancing, but it all gave the effect that someone had wandered in from another ballet by mistake. Donald's black and dingy green costume never appeared to stand out enough. These two costumes for the principal characters are the weakest in the whole work.

The yellow act-drop, with its two grey monoliths (said by some to be self-portraits of the designers), is most effective and makes a good contrast in that it is stronger than the scenes that come before and after.

The final scene in the King's palace consists of great slabs of stone in the greys and pinks that seem to appear when the sun shines on rain-washed granite. Over it all there is a mauve tinge as though somebody had sprayed the ballet with the colours of moorland heather.

This is the first work for the theatre by these two Scottish painters and we shall look forward to seeing more from them. It is most encouraging to think that Sadler's Wells are using the important painters of our time to decorate new creations. It is following the practice of Diaghilev who first introduced easel painters into the theatre rather than the more stereotyped stage designer. The result, though not always entirely satisfactory, brings something new and vital to our stages, and stops ballet from getting into that easy and dangerous rut. **Peter Williams**



Death (Beryl Grey) finally gets Donald because a part of his bargain was that he must not pray. Some children forgot how to say their prayers so Donald taught them. The role of Death was the first created role for Grey for many years. She was magnificent all through, dancing with a brilliance that is seldom seen in English dancers (Photo: Baron)

curtain up!

ONE of the most spectacular events of the revival of the *Sleeping Beauty*, at Covent Garden on January 9, was the big bang which preceded the entrance of Carabosse. Many members of the audience were seen to rise several inches from their seats. This certainly lends a good deal of punch to the Prologue but actually Tchaikovsky wrote a quite effective little tempest on his own which is now almost inaudible in all the general carry-on.

At the dress rehearsal, Ninette de Valois thought she would spring a surprise on the company so as to see their reactions—nobody was told about the big bang. It was thought that the dancers would immediately spring into wild animation but actually the reverse happened. Nobody moved a muscle and they remained like dummies in their places. Whether this was on account of their British grit in the face of an emergency or the fact that they were petrified with fright, is rather uncertain.

The one person who, in the story, is responsible for the whole thing—Carabosse herself—certainly showed she did not care for it. Before he entered Frederick Ashton cowered back against the pass door with his fingers in his ears. When the noise has subsided he made a frantic dive for the chariot, waiting in the wings, and drove on. It says a lot for his artistry that his abhorrence of loud noises was not apparent on the stage.

IT seems that you can still fool some of the people all the time. It will be remembered that the aforesaid bang takes place during the christening of the infant Princess Aurora. One old lady in the audience was quite convinced that the baby was real and she complained to her friend that it was dreadful to make all that noise and scare such a small baby. Her friend argued for sometime that of course it was only a doll. Finally, the old lady put an end to it all by saying, "Don't talk such nonsense, dear, I am older than you and I have been here for many years and I *know* they never fool you at Covent Garden."

We wonder if our National Opera House realises what a great reputation it has.

Left to right—Johann Paulsen, Mrs. Perrottet, Francis Graça (Artistic Director of the Verde Gaio), Philippe Perrottet, Fernando Isasca (principal dancer of the Verde Gaio) having dinner at the Machado Restaurant in Lisbon.

IN spite of the many books, magazines and leaflets devoted to the impartation of information about ballet and its history, there are still a great number of people who regularly attend performances in comparative ignorance of ballet's background.

The walls of the bar at the Mercury Theatre are, as most people know, covered with a magnificent collection of lithographs of dancers from the Romantic Era—Taglioni, Grisi, Livry, and so on.

At a recent Sunday evening Ballet Workshop programme, two ladies were studying these prints during the interval. "You see, dear," said one to the other, "these are the pictures of all the dancers who have appeared in this theatre."

Oh! even more hallowed ground.

THE mania for collecting autographs at stage doors is a curious one. In the old days people used to wait for hours to catch a glimpse of their adored one and then perhaps might be so brave as to ask them to sign a book. Today the appearance of almost anyone at the stage door is the signal for a most undignified scramble, dirty bits of paper and old programmes are shoved under the dancer's nose. After a considerable time has been spent signing these objects, the dancer usually hears people saying, "Who on earth is he?" or "She danced pretty badly tonight," or "I'll swop two of him for one of Helpmann," or some such equally encouraging comment.

Markova is very wise, she never takes part in any stage-doorery except to go straight to her car. She has all the autograph books collected and brought to her dressing room where she signs them before they are returned to their owners.

In this respect Ray Powell tells an amusing story against himself. Since Ashton left for America he has been dancing the role of Carabosse in the *Sleeping Beauty*. He was signing a woman's autograph book and as he was doing so, she turned to her friend and said, "He plays Carabosse but he is not as good as Frederick Ashton," then she added, "and he is not as good as Robert Helpmann either." In actual fact Ray is as good as both of them but his interpretation is quite different.

MOST people buy a programme when they go to the ballet but they rarely get an accurate list of the dancers performing. About a year ago, during a performance of *Les Sylphides* at the Stoll, a person turned to his companion and said in a rapt voice, "It's amazing, Dolin never seems to get any older." Not so amazing really as, despite the programme credit, the dancer in question was John Gilpin.

Probably the worst offender are the Sadler's Wells companies. It is difficult, we know, to give every small change of cast when dancers are suddenly taken ill. Though with such important numbers as, for instance the Three Ivans, inaccuracy is not so forgivable. This resulted, a month or two back, in *The Times* critic praising three dancers who had not actually appeared. The critic cannot be blamed as it is impossible to see who people are under a mass of make-up and beards.

(*Continued on page* 17.)

odd jobs...

You might find him at Sadler's Wells or Covent Garden, or you might equally find him punching your ticket on the way home. Tony McLeod is a trollybus conductor on London Transport's route 653. *When on day-shift he spends his evenings in the theatre. Always to be found at the head of overnight queues for booking at Covent Garden.*

happy birthday to...

Derek Westlake	Rambert Ballet	February 4
Audrey Brookes	Rambert Ballet	February 5
Kathleen Gray	Empire Ballet	February 8
Anna Cheselka	In Paris	February 9
Margaret Pollen	Rambert Ballet	February 9
Maryon Lane	Sadler's Wells Theatre Ballet	February 15
Gerd Larsen	Sadler's Wells Ballet	February 19
Alexander Grant	Sadler's Wells Ballet	February 22
Solange Golovine	De Cuevas Grand Ballet	February 24
Grace Greenaway	Empire Ballet	February 27
Malcolm Hughes	International Ballet	February 28
Pearl Gaden	Rambert Ballet	March 2
Maurice Metliss	Sadler's Wells Theatre Ballet	March 8
Pirmin Trecu	Sadler's Wells Theatre Ballet	March 13

Readers with birthday cards for dancers can address them c/o DANCE AND DANCERS, Mersey House, 132-4, Fleet Street, London, E.C.4. Letters will be forwarded to the dancer's home address to arrive on the birthday. Please post early.

There is not a company which has appeared in London during the past eight years that has paid proper attention to its programmes.

By having a typed list of all divergences from the printed programme, placed near the box-office such mistakes could be overcome.

WE are beginning to think of ourselves in an entirely new role. Of course, we know that we have not the right figures for cupids and those aches and pains in our shoulders are not where wings are starting to sprout, they are just due to rheumatism and old age. We also need many weeks under the sun (or sun lamp) before we would dare to appear in the traditional costume. But there is no doubt that DANCE AND DANCERS is becoming a match-maker. We keep on hearing about people who meet through our correspondents' column ; it seems that many hearts have become entwined. Now our Odd Jobs are becoming mixed-up in it. Our first one, Clive Bousfield, whose photograph was in the August issue, met his fiancée (a pupil at the Cone Ripman School) through our columns.

We wish them, and also all those who have been brought together through these pages, every happiness.

PEOPLE who go to the ballet a great deal frequently find that the little accidents that happen (not the ones that cause people pain or distress) tend to make the performances more lively.

When Leslie Edwards did his first Don Quixote at Covent Garden on January 7, those members of the audience who knew the ballet had a great surprise when the curtain rose. Instead of the usual Burra drop curtain, which shows a nightmare montage of Don Quixote's life, we were regaled with the drop curtain which precedes the Cave of Montesinos scene with the knight lowering himself down into the cave. When the moment came for the correct place of this latter curtain we, of course, got the intended front curtain. Both curtains losing any point they may have had. What had actually happened was that they had been reversed on the lines and the stage hands had been faithfully following their cue blissfully ignorant of the fact that they were letting down the wrong curtains.

Time will not wither

Continuing our policy of presenting those who, though not actually dancers, are responsible for much that goes to make ballet the most decorative of theatre arts, we take you to a maker of artificial flowers.

R. Windrum, Ltd., of Cecil Court, Charing Cross Road, London, W.C.2, have been responsible for most of the beautiful flowers which adorn the ballets at Covent Garden and Sadler's Wells.

NOT far from Leicester Square tube-station, situated in one of those little alley-ways connecting Charing Cross Road with St. Martin's Lane, is a florist's shop.

Flowers are everywhere—in the windows, on trellisses, in the shop itself. Roses and carnations are strangely mingled with exotic tropical blooms that look as if they came straight out of *South Pacific*. They did.

These flowers were never picked and have no scent. They did not grow but were made in a basement work-room; for this is no ordinary flower-shop but a theatrical florist's.

For over forty years the expression "Flowers and Foliage by Windrams" has made its appearance in theatre programmes. Today Windrams are maintaining that tradition and their flowers bestrew half of London's stages. Nearly all our readers will at some time have seen examples of their work, either at Covent Garden or Sadler's Wells.

As one would expect the making of artificial flowers is a skilled and complicated business. Most of the flowers seen in ballet are based on original drawings by the designer. They are normally made from white linen, which is first dyed according to the designer's requirements.

Petals are cut, dried and wired together. The delicate veining essential for realism is embossed on the leaves and petals by a metal stamp. When the flower or spray is completed it is treated with a special solution to make it fire-proof.

All the flowers have a wire skeleton which enable them to be bent and twisted into any position desired.

The flowers themselves are exquisite little pieces of workmanship, each so realistically constructed that it could easily be taken for the genuine article. A rare example of artifice imitating nature, and one which surely would have gladdened the heart of a Burne-Jones or Rossetti.

And, of course, in some ways these little replicas are improvements on nature. They may never smell, but then neither do they droop.

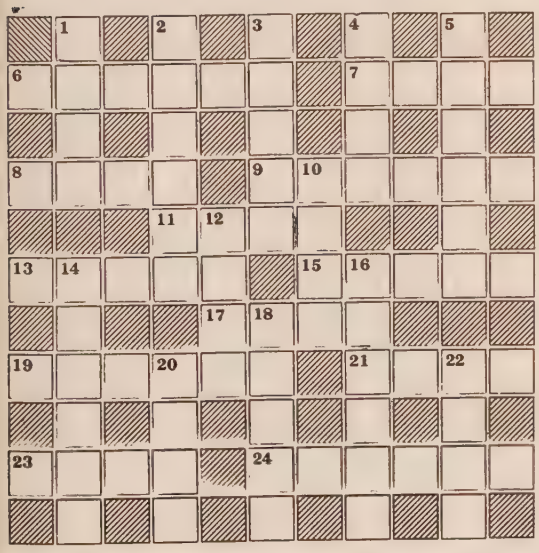
A. C.

Joe and Kitty are seen making some of the exotic blooms, in the manner described in the article (*Photo: Cris Ware*)

NEXT MONTH

The next issue, published in the beginning of March, will contain articles and many photographs of dancers and ballets everywhere. To the regular features—Anton Dolin's Page, New Ballets, Curtain Up, Schools, etc.—will be added articles of a topical nature. If you are having difficulty in obtaining your DANCE AND DANCERS regularly why not take out a subscription. For details see page five.

crossword . . . 9



BEGINNERS CLUES

ACROSS

6. Carries the load at Covent Garden. (6).
7. A dancers most prized possession. (4).
8. Danish ballerina, Sandy but only part ginger. (4).
9. The need for an understudy is this.
11. A cover, prominent on the Dolin cover. (4).
13. Not only fruit drinks are served in this bar at Covent Garden. (5).
15. Go on stage. (5).
17. Would the lime shine this far ? (4).
19. Light from it inspired a Rambert Ballet. (1, 5).
21. May be based on lore. (4).
23. There is one to most ballets, and always one for the lighting. (4).
24. Sounds like the first Dancing School. (6).

DOWN

1. Field or Gilpin. (4).
2. Elsie and Doris could fill *Swan Lake.* (3).
3. Could describe some settings for modern ballet. (1, 4).
4. The banner to fail. (4).
5. Fairy of the lamp. (1, 5).
10. Leer up at the dance. (4).
12. No stamp needed. (1, 1, 1, 1).
14. Only painted on *Swan Lake.* (6).
16. A first night complaint. (6).
18. Mean. (5).
20. Not out of. (4).
22. In place of —— tenant Belaye. (4).

VETERANS CLUES

ACROSS

6. Welcome back to gram for dancing. (6).
7. Colour of train or bird. (4).
8. Usual role of *danseur noble.* (4).
9. Good description for tights, but not for legs. (6).
11. Not quite so fat, but comfortable. (4).
13. It is a critic's job to write as he sees it. (5).
15. Imp who neglects his work. (5).
17. Could have designed a Regency Ballet. (4).
19. Has been dancing recently with Ballet Russe. (6).
21. Such language from the goatheard. (4).
23. Long description of Don Quixote. (4).
24. Unbeatable roles in *Schertzi Dalla Sorte.* (6).

DOWN

1. A recent film had three of this. (4).
2. Loved by a Thief. (1, 5).
3. A choreographer to lean on. (4).
4. A letter has come off the cable. (4).
5. Recently made a triumphant return to London. (6).
10. Giselle was one from the country. (4).
12. A positive negative. (2, 2).
14. What a bad performance has often done to a good ballet. (6).
16. Where stars come from. (6).
18. Landa. (5).
20. Lander. (4).
22. Make a noise even on tip-toes. (4).

The above crossword is for amusement only. The answers will be found on page 25.

A class at the Phyllis Bedells School. Reading from left to right, the dancers are—Judy Collins, Anna Carne and Joan Blakeney. Behind are Jennifer Gay, Anne Johnson, Audrey Howard and Patty Sinnott. (*Photo : K. Hutton, Picture Post*)

Phyllis Bedells (*Photo: Gordon Anthony*)

So you want to dance

by ANTHONY COWPER

6. PHYLLIS BEDELLS SCHOOL, 28 Quex Road, West Hampstead, N.W.6

This month our column is visiting one of Britain's most famous schools, the Phyllis Bedells School in West Hampstead.

PHYLLIS BEDELLS occupies an unusual niche in ballet history. Apart from Lydia Sokolova who as a Diaghilev dancer was in a somewhat different position, Miss Bedells was the first British dancer to attain ballerina status.

What is more she attained it before the existence of British ballet.

Born in Bristol, she received her dance training from Cavalazzi, Genée, Bolm, Cecchetti and Pavlova. Between the date of her debut at the Empire in 1906 as a small soloist in *Alice in Wonderland* and her "Farewell" at the London Hippodrome on November 8th, 1935, the years were filled with achievement.

For three years she was prima-ballerina at the Empire succeeding Lydia Kyasht. On leaving the Empire, after a changed policy towards ballet, she danced with Novikoff, was ballerina for a Beecham season at Covent Garden, co-starred with George Robey, danced with Pavlova.

She first retired in 1921, following a severe bout of arthritis, but as she says herself, "greasepaint was in my blood", and in 1925 she was back on the stage, co-starring with the Hulberts. Later she danced with Dolin at the Coliseum.

It was inevitable that Miss Bedells, like Dolin, should assist in the birth of British ballet and when the Camargo Society was formed, she danced in almost all its performances. She was also a guest artist at some of the early performances of the Vic-Wells.

The climax to her remarkable career came at her "Farewell". At this performance virtually the entire resources of that, by then, lusty fledgling British ballet, rallied round and danced with and for her.

Teaching had always played a part in her life, indeed she was one of the original committee members of the Royal Academy of Dancing. On her retirement naturally she formed a school and passed on her experience to others.

The school possesses a spacious studio and also utilises a hall opposite the main building. Its activities are divided into three branches; the professional student-classes, the classes for amateurs, and the school's consultative side. Miss Bedells gives much advice to other teachers and frequently has a few of their pupils loaned out to her for tuition. There is also a special class for infants.

All the students, except the most promising, take classes in ballroom and tap-dancing. They also receive experience in teaching, all of them teaching one of the infants at least once a week.

Miss Bedells places great importance on the musical aspect of ballet, not only encouraging her pupils to study an instrument, but also ensuring that the musical basis of her classes is of the highest standard.

Her personal experience as an artist helps her to instil confidence and stage-craft into her pupils. Many of her past students have achieved distinction, including Felicity Grey and Laurel Martyn, but it is of her present pupils she is perhaps most anxious to speak.

Of Anna Carne, already a junior soloist at Covent Garden, of Joan Blakeney now on the fringes of the company, of Judy Collins, another girl of whom Miss Bedells has the highest hopes.

The ballet of ten years time is being made in the classrooms of today. It is a comforting thought that one of these classrooms is under the jurisdiction of this kindly, distinguished Elder of British ballet.

Approach to dancing

by JOHN GREGORY

The fourth of this series of monthly articles in which John Gregory, Director of the School of Russian Dancing, is taking readers through all stages in a dancer's development. Last month he dealt with child teaching, now he turns to the student.

4. THE STUDENT

I SHOULD like to give some general advice to students between the ages of 15 and 21. Although I believe the age from 10 to 15 is a particularly receptive and fruitful age for cultivating dancers, it is not until children have reached a certain maturity of development and physical growth, and have passed out of the educationalist's hands that they can work fully and unhampered at professional dance studies.

It is important that the student approaching dance be clear and certain in his objective. He should realise that the dance does not offer an easy life; but rather that it calls for toil and sacrifice, and brings its measure of disappointment, and unhappiness. If he is willing to accept the hazards, and suffer the disappointments without losing his love of the art, then undoubtedly he has a vocation, and should proceed. But if at this juncture he has doubts, then he would do better to become a shorthand typist.

When once the mind is made up there is the problem of finding the right school; and this will not be easy. There are many schools offering him excellent and attractive facilities, but none of them offering the seeker any surety of fulfilment as a dancer. There can be no guarantee on either side, and some disillusionment may take place before the student will find his ideal surroundings.

Having found the school which promises satisfaction, the student must learn how to work. Singleness of purpose is important for success. The student of dance endeavours to be master not only of his body but of his habits. A formidable task!

How can we come to this state and achieve such mastery? We do not feel everyday the same: one day we suffer a disappointment, another day we feel tired, or stiff, or our liver is sluggish. Despite these disturbances we have to put our concentration upon our work which is dancing. When we enter the classroom our concentration and interest must be fixed on that one purpose, we must learn to work always with thoroughness, to apply our whole mind and body—and each new effort must be a new experience, as it were a fresh breath. That freshness and interest must never be allowed to flag. Only this way can we become conquerors of ourselves.

Man by his determination and practice may rise above the physical and natural shortcomings and the drawbacks of his daily existence. By our spirit we may bring a grandeur and a rapture to the commonplace, to the everyday toil and labour. There is poetry to be found in every gesture, at every turn, at every stage of the way. But these divine emotions must be searched for. It is so necessary, so vital to find the joy in one's work; work unhappily done, with bad grace, with distaste can never be satisfactory. By tirelessly striving we must find that joy in our work and not allow it to become drudgery; then we may know that it will be good work.

With the commencement of his studies it is natural and commendable that the student should thoroughly soak himself in the atmosphere of the dance, he should acquire a knowledge of ballet history. Learn something of its tradition, and go to see regular performances by contemporary companies. But his studies should not be entirely confined to class-room, theatre, and ballet books otherwise his vision will be narrow. He should seek knowledge in other pastures, he should go to museums, picture galleries, to concerts. Painting, sculpture and architecture, drama, and music, great arts in themselves are all contributory elements of the ballet; an understanding and grasp of their perspective, in time, will assist the student in becoming a cultured artist. By this means he will be able to look at his own art with discrimination, and not fall a victim to the mob hysteria with which so many dancers and balletomanes are afflicted.

Above all else the student dancer should find sincerity in himself. He should ask himself. Why do I want to dance? Is it a superficial fancy on my part? Is it egotistical vanity? Exhibitionism? Or is it my expression of joy in life. Is it my worship of the divine?

A good dancer will grow out of steadfast practice, and constancy to that objective. Thus the class must come foremost in the dance student's life; and must remain so throughout all the vast and varied experiences of the dancer's life; the class is his daily prayer; his prayer and his effort towards perfection.

The artist dancer after years of study and work has never finished striving for the ideal; the totality of perfection which makes him supreme. That is his life-work, which begins when for the first time he enters the school and takes his place at the *barre*.

If he can retain through all his days the interest, the enthusiasm, and the intense desire to do right, that was his desire and purpose on that first occasion, then with the inspired help of his teacher in whom his confidence and belief must be complete—then will he reap in himself the rewards of those efforts. He will become in truth—a dancer worthy of the name.

Dancers you will know by CLIVE BARNES

Continuing our series of dancers who are known to you but whom we feel you will soon know far better, we again choose two male soloists from the Sadler's Wells Ballet.

RAY POWELL

Studied at Sadler's Wells School, joined company in 1941. *In Forces from* 1944-1947, *when he rejoined the Wells. Principal creations—Old man in* Promenade ; *Gluttony in* The Quest ; *Praying Mantis in* The Spider's Banquet ; *The Comedian in* Clock Symphony. *Principal parts—Tailor and the Man with a Rope in* Rake's Progress ; *Red King in* Checkmate ; *Street Boy in* Miracle in the Gorbals ; *Gravedigger in* Hamlet ; *Tarantella Doll* in Boutique ; *Blue Boy in* Patineurs ; *Ernest in* Wedding Bouquet ; *Snake in* Tiresias ; "*Ashton*" *Ugly Sister in* Cindrella; *Carabosse and Ivan in* Sleeping Beauty; *Dr. Coppelius in* Coppelia; *Lead in* Ballabile.

Ray Powell (*Photo: Maurice Seymour*)

POWELL has had many parts, nearly all of them second-hand. Like Legerton ,he sets a fine example to the company with the thoroughly professional attitude he takes towards his work. When on stage he dances and mimes all the time, whether he is in the foreground or background, soloist or *corps*. His outstanding portrayals have been the Man with the Rope, Carabosse, and Dr. Coppelius. He is a dancer of considerable vigour who always gives of his best. He has a slight tendency to lack variety in characterisation, sometimes adopting his customary air of grotesque pugnacity when it is not altogether suitable (*e.g.*, as one of the Ugly Sisters in *Cinderella*). It would be interesting to see him again in a pure dancing role such as the Blue Boy in *Patineurs*.

HENRY LEGERTON

Born in Melbourne. First came to England in 1939. *Studied with Idzikowski and danced with the London Ballet. Returned to Australia in* 1940 *and became foundation member of Helene Kirsova's company. Served in the Australian Army during the war. Came back to England in* 1946 ; *joined Massine's touring production of* A Bullet in the Ballet. *Joined the Sadler's Wells in* 1947. *Principal parts—Shop Assistant* Boutique Fantasque ; *Clockmaker* Clock Symphony ; *Travelling Barber* Don Quixote ; *Rake in* Rake's Progress; *Ivan in* Sleeping Beauty.

LEGERTON has many fine qualities but has not had a great deal of luck. His unexpected and successful assumption of Grant's role in *Clock Symphony* should have established him as a leading character dancer, but the ballet was dropped and his performance went almost unnoticed. His next chance should have been as the Rake a couple of seasons back, but he unfortunately injured his foot and could not dance. Eventually, however, he was able to make the Rake his first major success. With more luck than he has had in the past it should be the first of many. He is frequently used as a mime but when given the opportunity to dance he displays an unexpectedly strong character technique. He possesses fast turns and good elevation (witness his remarkable debut with the company as the Shop Assistant in *Boutique Fantasque*). An interested choreographer could bring out much in him that is at the moment still latent.

Henry Legerton as the Rake in Rake's Progress (*Photo: Gordon Anthony*)

The design by Leon Bakst is from James Laver's Drama, its costume and decor, *reviewed in the next column. It is for one of the Three Ivans in Diaghilev's* The Sleeping Princess (*Alhambra Theatre, London,* 1921).

It is interesting to compare this design with actual costume worn by Vassilkovsky on the opposite page. It will be noticed that much of the decoration has been lost over the years, and the white shirt is no longer worn. This causes one to wonder why, when it is still possible to study the original designs, so many mistakes are made? It is as unfair to misrepresent the work of a designer as it is to mess about with choreography or music.

Just published

BALLET ANNUAL 1952

Edited by
ARNOLD L. HASKELL

The sixth issue of this handsome and authoritative year book of the ballet, superbly illustrated with a colour frontispiece and more than 100 photographs. 25s. net.

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Outstanding Events of the Year	THE EDITOR
With the Sadler's Wells Ballet in America	LUDOVIC KENNEDY
Forty Years Writing on the Ballet	CYRIL BEAUMONT
Royal Danish Ballet Festival	P. W. MANCHESTER
The 1950-51 Ballet Season in France	PIERRE MICHAUT
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New Books

The Ballet Annual (Sixth Issue), Edited by Arnold L. Haskell (A. & C. Black, 25*s.*).

THIS new edition of Mr. Haskell's annual merry-go-round gives a very good idea of the intense ballet overcrowding that was 1951. It might almost be called the Cranko-Spanish number. The works of John Cranko deservedly dominate the entire creative scene—the book is sandwiched between charming end-papers of Osbert Lancaster's costumes for *Pineapple Poll.*

Last year, we had the temerity to criticise the volume in a mild way, because we felt that it did not fully cover all the activities of the year. This year we have nothing but praise for the admirable way the many important dance events have been recorded; also for the fine collection of photographs which do not, as is so often the case in books of this sort, greet us wearily like friends we are forced to meet daily in the street. They are well laid-out and even the familiar ones have an air of freshness. G. B. L. Wilson's gossipy ones of Festival Ballet in Monte Carlo are fun and there could be more of them sprinkled through the book.

Mr. Beaumont tells of his forty years of writing about ballet; Mr. Scott Goddard considers Ravel's music for *Daphnis and Chloe;* Mr. Chujoy takes us to four opera houses and more or less brings them into our homes though he makes the unfortunate mistake of commending that ghastly habit to serving tea and ices in the auditorium of Covent Garden (a barbarous habit if ever there was one). These together with the reviews of ballet in almost every country in the world make this a record of a frequently exciting twelve months. Only one thing—please! please! Mr. Haskell, could not we have an index in the seventh issue?

Drama, its costumes and decor, by James Laver (The Studio, 30*s.*).

ALTHOUGH this book mainly concerns itself with Drama, the progress of its clothing runs hand in hand with that of ballet. The early triumphs and pageants of the middle ages contained as much dancing as anything else. It was not until the early years of this century that the approach to ballet design diverged from the main stream of theatrical decoration.

Mr. Laver is the Keeper of the Department of Engraving, Illustration and Design at the Victoria and Albert Museum. He therefore has access to one of the finest collections of theatrical material in the world. All well and good but, oh, how boring such a wealth of material could be in the hands of many. Mercifully for our generation he is a man of great taste and, what is more, has the ability to make every little sortie into his treasure house seem like an adventure into wonderland. He has a wit, which could only be possessed by the author of *Nymph Errant,* so that his writings on any subject never have a dry musty air.

It is only possible, you designers and would-be designers, to know about the theatre if you fully understand all that has been built-up through the centuries to make our stages in their present form. A knowledge of background history is essential. When you have read and digested Mr. Laver's words and studied the magnificent illustrations, shut the book and forget about the Bibiena family, Inigo Jones or the Renaissance masques (there is far too much cribbing and inferior reproduction of these majestic festivals going on).

The Studio has, in the past, produced several beautiful books on the decorative side of the theatre; this new volume adds nobility to a formidable list.

Balletten i Dag (*The Royal Danish Ballet Today*), by Svend Kragh-Jacobsen, with photographs by H. I. Mydtskov (Oscar Fraenckel & Co., Copenhagen).

THE Royal Danish Ballet is so rift in twain by internal upheavals that this booklet has a certain poignancy to those who remember the great company even only a few months ago. Many of the dancers mentioned are now scattered about the world and Ballet Master Harald Lander, the most important of all, is in Paris.

Nevertheless it makes a good record of the many fine dancers and ballets which we all hope will be together again in the near future. The photographs are well reproduced and Svend Kragh-Jacobsen (the most important critic and ballet historian in Denmark) has supplied concise and informative notes. **P. W.**

EXPECT THESE

In March we can expect *The Art of the Dance in French Literature* by Deirdre Priddin (A. & C. Black, 18*s.*). This has a preface by Arnold Haskell, an introduction by Cyril Beaumont, and seventeen illustrations. It will contain extracts from the many great French writers on the dance. Also in March comes *Ballet for Beginners* by Felicity Gray (Phoenix House, 12*s.* 6*d.*) with 106 photographs by Gordon Anthony. This will put in permanent form the famous television series of the same name.

In April we should be getting three books from A. & C. Black—*Antonio, a study of a Spanish dancer* by Cyril Beaumont (8*s.* 6*d.*), *Dictionary of ballet terms* by Leo Kersley and Janet Sinclair 10*s.* 6*d.*), and a new book by Celia Sparger on Placing in the dancer (5*s.*).

Dance and Dancers . . . . AT HOME

SADLER'S WELLS AT COVENT GARDEN

DANCERS IN NEW ROLES

THE performances in December and January were enlivened by the revelation of various artists in new and more important roles. On December 31, Kenneth Melville repeated his Albrecht for the benefit of the Press. The impression I received, when I unofficially sneaked into a matinee during the autumn to see his first performance, was endorsed. This is a most mature performance and when he has got rid of his rather too noble bearing in the first act, it will be a great one.

Ray Powell took over the Grant role in *Ballabile* on January 2. He showed a very nice sense of comedy and exaggerated movement which was particularly successful in the funeral scene. The work would lose nothing by the omission of the absurd "Impressions of Spain" finale. which Petit only inserted at the last moment and which does its best to ditch all that has gone before.

On the same evening Rosemary Lindsay made a valiant attempt at Beryl Grey's role of Death in *Donald of the Burthens*, which she took over at a few hours notice. She got through it most adequately though it is hard to think of anybody else creating the same effect as Grey. A few nights later, Lindsay having had considerably more rehearsal was very good.

Les Sylphides is the one ballet which seldom gets a good performance by the company except when Beryl Grey happens to be in it. On January 7 it was hard to recognise the work that was so uninspired on the night of the *Donald of the Burthens premiere*. The *corps de ballet* danced very well indeed and so did the three principals—Heaton, Farron, and Nerina. Macmillan made one of the best Poets we have seen in the company. He had the right feeling, partnered well, and danced a near-faultless variation.

On the same evening, Leslie Edwards played the title role in *Don Quixote*. Although physically unlike the knight of Cervantes, he somehow made the part more "in the round"—the ballet thus acquired a new meaning. Edwards is an artist who gets small chance to shine in important roles and yet everything he does is well conceived. It is the perfect playing of small roles such as Cattalabutte and Hilarion that make the difference between a good and bad company—the stars may be supreme but if they are not properly surrounded and backed-up then it all goes for nothing. Through the years, Edwards has played all these unrewarding parts parts with a sincerity which only comes from great artistry. Let us hope that such faithful service will be rewarded by even more important roles.

SLEEPING BEAUTY

WHEN the Beauty sleeps in Bow Street all is well with the Sadler's Wells Ballet for this is the classic that the company gives better than any other. Small wonder because the Petipa-Tchaikovsky masterpiece abounds in wonderful things to dance and the score is such that it must be as much of a joy for the dancer as it is for the audience to hear.

The 188th performance at the Royal Opera House on January 9 saw all Oliver Messel's sets repainted and his costumes re-made. The sets are more beautiful than before because now it is possible to see the details in the backcloths. It all has the magnificence that can be the only background for this regal ballet. The rocks in the Vision scene have been toned down and the cave no longer has that purple that always seemed so alien to the landscape. Here, the moon has been painted on the backcloth and it is no longer lit up as the scene starts to darken—which is a pity.

DISTINGUISHED AURORAS

WHEN the work was first mounted in 1946 one made allowances for some of the costumes, because at that time materials were hard to get. To-day, it is not possible to be so lenient and it is rather sad to think that, while money had to be spent, more thought was not given to re-designing some rather glaring faults. The Queen's dress is too flimsy, the fairies are most undistinguished (with the exception of Carabosse), the Marchionesses wear the most absurd habits that ever went a-hunting. The sleeves and flame-coloured flowers (which swear horribly with everything else) are most irritating on Aurora's birthday dress. Not large points any of them, but things that slightly mar ones enjoyment of such a lovely production.

In England, we have become so used to associating the Aurora role with Fonteyn that others have not received the attention that they should have done. After a nervous start on the first night, Beryl Grey was lyrical and beautiful. She had a breadth and all-embracing warmth, rare in English dancers. The shaky *Rose Adagio* was followed by one of the best variations I have seen for many years. Her particular qualities make her so right for the second act and she was helped by a lovely new variation (reconstructed by Ashton to some music we have not heard before and said to be correct) which is almost one of the best things in the ballet. Incidently, a lot of work has been done on the fairy part of this scene—all for the better. Her last act *pas de deux* was brilliant though I always get nervous about her height in the "fish-dives" as I never think there is a partner tall enough to stop her head from crashing on the floor.

On January 11, Violetta Elvin consolidated the feeling one has recently had of her growing surety. Where Grey was lyrical, Elvin was radiant. She still lacks breadth and she tends to hurry certain steps too much but her performance has improved a hundred per cent from this time last year, Given another year, hers should be in the class of the great Aurora's of our time—Spessivtzeva and Fonteyn.

FINE SUPPORT

NOT only have we had good Auroras but also the whole standard of the company has risen to such an extent that one no longer gets the impression of a ballerina supported, at rather long distance, by a collection of dancers. Compared with a few years ago how good the six Fairy Cavaliers are ! How good to see these boys doing *entrechats*, turning, and finishing all together. In this same act, Ashton's Carabosse has also quieteneddown and is so much better for it. He is so good but I cannot help feeling that it would be improved even more if there was a little more light and shade. She is such an obviously evil creature from the moment she comes trundling on ; she starts to vent her spleen too soon. If she entered more pleasantly, carried on like an affronted dowager rather pathetically until the moment when she says that the little Princess shall surely die, it would gain in effect. From then on she can let herself go in a whirlwind of hate.

Another point I never feel quite happy about is the fact that the Queen has to beg and implore, it is most undignified behaviour. Surely the fairies do all this while the King and Queen remain icily on their throne.

(*Left*) *Kiril Vassilkovsky as one of the Ivans in the original Ballet Russe production of* Aurora's Wedding. *His dancing in the famous* pas de trois *was one of the highlights of a not very distinguished production of this remnant of Diaghilev's* Sleeping Princess. *The choreography by Nijinska for this number is far and away superior to any other. This costume is wrongly attributed to Benois and is, in fact, a slightly watered-down version of the original one by Leon Bakst.*

(*Right*) *Sonia Arova as the Queen of Shemakhan from Fokine's* Coq d'Or. *This work was revived by Original Ballet Russe at Festival Hall without the original Gontcharova scenery.*

The role of the mysterious Queen who tricks the doddering old King Dodon, is a complex one. Since her first performances in Festival Hall, Arova greatly improved. From the first she danced well but rather lacked that particular sinuous quality which is rather essential. By the time the company came to the Adelphi she had improved very considerably

(*Photos: Roy Round*)

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The Queen might make a gesture as though she was about to go on her knees but the King should stop her.

There is a melancholy about the Vision scene (Act 2) which, so far, the Prince Florimunds of Field and Somes have never quite conveyed. Nor does the Countess ever give the feeling that she is in love with the Prince and when he refuses to accompany the hunt she flounces off rather petulantly instead of that rather lingering and sorrowful exit which can be so moving.

NOBLE DIVERTISSEMENT

THE Divertissements in the last act are really fit to be set before a King. Both Macmillan and Chatfield make as good Florestans as I can ever remember ; the former has the elevation and the latter has the style. Margaret Dale's White Cat is a feline little minx which she has always given well (she was outstanding in this when the present production opened the company's reign at Covent Garden in 1946).

Brian Shaw's Blue Bird is now very fine indeed, he has not got the lightness of an Idzikovsky or a Gilpin but technically I have seldom seen it better danced. The untidiness that used to mar some of his work has vanished and he now emerges as a dancer of the first order. As his female counterpart (this production does not retain the original idea of it being a Princess and a Blue Bird), Rowena Jackson has improved very considerably and her turns are brilliant. What a pity that the Three Ivans could not have new costumes because they look very drab in so much grandure ; Grant, Powell, Legerton and Clegg dance as if Vodka was their national drink but de Valois' choreography is not as exciting as was Nijinska's for the Diaghilev production.

It was a good idea to put in a variation for the Prince in the last act and although it has been well reconstructed by de Valois, full justice has not yet been done to it by either Field or Somes.

If only those people who go on carping about the standard of dancing in the company could compare these present performances with those of three and four years ago, I feel certain that they would be staggered at the difference. The dancing to-day really does justice to the greatest classical ballet of all time.

P.W.

FUTURE PLANS

Andrée Howard's *A Mirror for Witches* will have its first performance at Covent Garden on March 4. The costumes have been designed by the choreographer herself as well as Norman Adams. Ann Heaton and Phillip Chatfield have leading roles.

The latest title for Cranko's ballet, which has its *premiere* in April, is *Bonne-Bouche*. The principal roles will be taken by Pauline Clayden and Pamela May.

The company will go to Portugal for three weeks in April and whether they go to Australia or not in 1953 is, at the moment, uncertain.

There is every possibility that Frederick Ashton will mount the full-length *Sylvia* sometime in the summer.

ORIGINAL BALLET RUSSE IN FESTIVAL HALL

BALLET, in the form which we know it, is designed for theatres with a proscenium arch. When given in arenas and concert halls, it is almost impossible to get any idea of the effect which was originally intended. It is possible, however, under these un-ideal conditions to concentrate on the music and dancing. It was obvious, during the Christmas season at Festival Hall, that the Original Ballet Russe had improved very considerably since their opening canter in Wimbledon during the early autumn.

Herida May, Nina Stroganova, and Maya Koumani as the three Algerian ladies who sit around waiting in Delacroix painting Femmes d'Alger. *Dokoudovsky's ballet of the same name, was first given by Original Ballet Russe in Festival Hall on January* 3, 1952 (See page 24). *(Photo: Paul Wilson)*

Aurora's Wedding, which appeared to open most programmes, was not well danced on the whole. The exceptions which made it bearable were Sonia Arova's Aurora ; Joan Tucker in the same role ; Fairy's variations of Herida May and Toni Lander ; and Kiril Vassilkovsky as one of the Three Ivans. The rest was undistinguished and at times embarrassing. But the dancers could not be entirely blamed as they did not seem to be very happy about the stage and the remarkable acoustics of the hall made them sound like a troupe of elephants.

COQ D'OR

ONE would think that of all ballets, Fokine's *Coq d'Or* was the most unsuitable to be given without decors. The settings of Gontcharova are so magnificent and such an essential part of the whole. It was therefore the greatest surprise to find how successfully this work adapts itself to such alien surroundings. For the first time it was possible to see the wonderful invention of the choreography. How beautifully Fokine realised the satire of Pushkin's fairy tale ! From the waddling Boyars of the opening scene, the rich comedy of King Dodon's army, the sinister beauty of The Queen of Shemakhan and her court, it is the work of a genius.

It is considered rather smart in these days to dismiss works of this kind as being out-of-date and boring. Actually they are proof of how little we have advanced, when it comes to narrative ballet, since the early Diaghilev period. There is no choreographer or member of the audience who cannot benefit by a careful study of this work.

In this particular production there were many performances to commend. Dokoudovsky's King Dodon was a rich comedy study of a doddering and futile old man. Arova's Queen of Shemakhan was very well danced though she makes the role too obviously evil, she should be a more sinuous beauty, more enigmatic, not until the end should she reveal her true nature. Vassilkovsky, who seems to be most capable in everything he does, was as good a Prince Guidon as I ever remember. In the tiny role of Commander-in-Chief Polkan, Jack Carter revealed a sense of characterisation which he should be given more chance to develop.

In all the general goings-on, the role of the Golden Cockerel is frequently overlooked. It is a role that has always been associated with Riabouchinska. Today, an English dancer has added something of her own and made it into something more important. It was, of course, ideal for Paula Hinton as she can have, when such a thing is called for, a half-human quality. From the moment she is discovered crouched before the Astrologer (very well mimed by Jack Spurgeon) she seems to dominate the ballet. Her variation in the first scene was hard and brilliant.

The procession in the last scene used to be so exciting that it was hard to keep in one's seat. Now much of this has been lost as it needs many dancers of the calibre of Vassilkovsky to create any sort of effect. However taken all round this was a distinguished revival of a work which should never be lost.

PETER DAUBENY PRESENTS

(*Continued from page* 9)

what he ever was to know about showmanship; from his lips Peter heard about Rosario and Antonio. His growing interest in Spain was fostered by the film, *Blood and Sand.*

In the early months of 1951, Peter set off for Spain with his wife, Molly. After incredible complications he managed to contact Antonio in Madrid, who seemed to be under the impression that he was somebody else. After this mistaken identity and innumerable business ramifications had been unravelled, the two great Spanish dancers opened in Seven Dials in the early summer.

Since then the Cambridge Theatre has housed dancers of every nationality, and with success.

Many people might think that the presentation of companies was merely a matter of sitting at a desk with the telephone connected to every quarter of the globe. It is something far different. It needs hard work, bravery (how easy to lose a fortune overnight), and above all an inate sense of the theatre. It will be seen that Peter's life has well equipped him for his present role.

He has travelled far afield to find the right material to present and much of what he has seen he rejected owing to unsuitability for English audiences. That his judgement is unfaltering has been proved by the fact that many of his rejections have appeared in this country under another banner—and flopped. Much of his success has been due to his ability to surround himself with a good team (the secret of most successes in life). And he admits that he owes a lot to Impressario Leon Hepner and Press Representative Audrey Wordsworth.

But probably the secret of good presentation is the complete comprehension of what an audience wants. He knows the British public and many a time he has drastically altered programmes so that everything will be shown to full advantage. Every audience in the world differs in this respect.

Following the example of Cochran (who was also the godfather of his son) he has a taste for the exotic. If his presentations of last year are any example of what we may expect in the future, then we should be in for an exciting time. It looks as though the mantle of England's greatest showman may descend on Peter Daubeny. A more happy state one could not wish anyone.

Poul Gnatt as the Polovtsian Chief in Original Ballet Russe's production of Prince Igor. *Since the company disbanded, Gnatt returned to his native Denmark for a few weeks. After that there is every possibility that he will join a company in Australia*

GRADUATION BALL

GRADUATION BALL is a ballet which appeals greatly to the public as it is full of those things which never fail to make the older members of the audience nod and smile good-humouredly—Strauss waltzes, youthful flirtations, comic flirtation *en travesti*, all the corny old tricks which must have delighted our grand-parents at the Empire or the Alhambra. It is one of the most contrived ballets I have ever seen. It is presumably good theatre so one should not complain. Compared to Massine's *Beau Danube* (a masterpiece in this genre) it is loosely constructed, uninventive, and far too long. It has several moments which stand out like glasses of champagne at a tea-fight. The Drummer's dance now slickly given by Vassilkovsky, Toni Lander's La Sylphide, Anthony Burke's Old General, and Paula Hinton's Ronald Searle-like school-girl.

FEMMES D'ALGER

THE first new work by the company, *Femmes d'Alger*, had its *premiere* on January 3. Based by George Kirsta on Delacroix' painting in the Louvre, it was also Dokoudovsky's first attempt at choreography. The music was by the company's conductor, Joseph Horovitz.

When ballets are based on famous paintings, the subject should be very carefully chosen. It is all right when, as Ninette de Valois did, narrative painters are used Hogarth and Cruickshank were recording the behaviour and manners of their period. Their animation in ballet form does not necessarily detract from the painter's object. Delacroix's ladies are something quite different, they suggest a mood which the painter allows the spectator to interpret as he will. Their boredom is obvious, their thoughts are probably turned to men, but has one any right to presume this? Frankly I believe the practice of bringing pictures to life, to be a very dangerous one.

A passing pedlar tells the fortune of the three ladies and three sailors emerge who, after a considerable amount of coyness all round, make off with some near-Eastern trinkets and baubles. The three ladies are left to divert their thoughts, presumably, into other channels.

The work is divided-up into a far too lengthy and static introduction, a collection of *soli* for each sailor, three *pas de deux* for each sailor and his girl, all ending up in a jolly polka. There is humour certainly but the constant repetition turns it into a bore—jokes in ballet should be short, sharp, and slick. The three ladies, Herida May, Nina Stroganova and Maya Koumani, had little to do other than look bored and remarkably unlike the painting upon which they were modelled. The three sailors, Gnatt, Dokoudovsky and Vassilkovsky had not to bother about the painting so they were less inhibited and therefore danced their too-long *soli* with the verve and humour that was demanded of them.

The music made a pleasant background and never appeared to intrude though, it must be confessed, it did not create much impression either. Perhaps on second hearing its obvious merits will become more apparent.

OVER THE RIVER

ON January 16, the company moved across the river to the Adelphi Theatre. There were several factors that made this season less interesting than in Festival Hall—the stage was far too small for either the choreography of these large-scale works or for the scenery, the orchestra also seemed inadequate. In Festival Hall the latter had been augmented and was so good that it did a great deal to counteract the lack of scenery.

In addition to the works previously mentioned, it was possible to see Fokine's *Carnaval* and *Paganini* and Massine's *Les Presages*. Of the former, I would rather hold my peace; seldom can such a great work (and *Carnaval*, though feather-weight, is a great work) have been given with such lack of understanding of style and atmosphere. *Paganini*, never at any time a particularly important work, turned out to be one of the best ballets the company gave. The title role was beautifully mimed by Dokoudovsky; Sonia Arova made a valiant and, on the whole, successful, attempt at the Florentine Lady bewitched by the famous violinist; Herida May gave a fine performance as Guile.

Massine's *Les Presages*, which caused such a furore when it was first created in 1933, seemed terribly dated. The bone of contention used, in those days, to be the imposing of choreography on a musical form never intended to have such an imposition. Since then we have had so much music mutilated in the cause of ballet that we have become more hardened though, we hope, never resigned to this practice. No ordinary theatre orchestra could do justice to Tchaikovsky's Fifth Symphony so a Russian company should never, out of respect for one of her greatest composers, give it unless the conditions are ideal. The only thing which made this revival worth while was the performance of Herida May as Action. This role, always associated with Verchinina, was always dominant owing to its strong Central European tendencies. Herida May never caused one to regret that Verchinina was not dancing.

TRAGEDY

ON Saturday night, January 26, the company gave its last performance, closing a week earlier than was intended. Poor houses, disagreement amongst the directors caused this tragedy. A tragedy it certainly is when dancers are thrown out of work, a tragedy it also is when a fabulous repertoire is not seen to its best advantage. People seeing this company over the past few months could not have had the faintest idea of the true wonder of these ballets. In spite of this the company was getting into shape and it is a great pity that it all had to end before it had a real chance to prove itself.

P.W.

Ana Ricarda dancing in her own ballet, Fiesta, *with Festival Ballet in Monte Carlo. She is also mounting a new work for the de Cuevas company called* Inez de Castro (*Photo: Liseg*)

FESTIVAL BALLET

IN spite of the fact that Markova left Monte Carlo after the opening night of the season, owing to further trouble with her foot, the five weeks at the Theatre de Casino were a great success. The ballet which Frederick Ashton created for her to Liszt's *Mephisto Valse* had to be postponed until a later date. In its place David Lichine mounted a work to Vivaldi music, *Concerto Grosso en Ballet*, on January 17. Two night later they mounted *Scheherazade* with the Bakst costumes. This is the first time that an English company has attempted Fokine's ballet based on the first tale from the *Thousand and one nights* and which was such a sensation when the Diaghilev company first came to Western Europe in the early years of this century. The proposed production of the full-length *Coppelia* seems to have been shelved for the time.

Ana Ricarda danced herself in the first performance of her *Fiesta*; she has also added to, and revised, the work. It was one of the hits of the season. Krassovska had a great success in *Giselle*. Next month we shall publish a full account of the season with photographs of the new creations.

KATHERINE DUNHAM

ANY doubts that we may have had about Dunham repeating her success of three years ago, were soon dispelled at the end of the first part of her present show at the Cambridge Theatre. On the first night, January 8, it was a pleasure to renew acquaintance with this lively and colourful entertainment.

Dunham has collected her material from the West Indies and the Americas, and by her knowledge of the art and craft of the theatre, makes it into something really exciting. Her present company is a little smaller than the one she brought to the Prince of Wales Theatre and there do not appear to be so many good dancers, but what she has together with some excellent singers should give no one cause to complain.

NEW PROGRAMMES

THE first third of the programme starts with the beautiful songs of the Brazilian poet Dorival Caymmi. This quiet opening is good because the programme works up to a remarkable climax with the *Shango* ritual from Trinidad. In the mounting excitement of this journey we looked in on some *Choros* (19th century Brazilian Quadrilles) with their pretty patchwork costumes, a zany carnaval dance from Northern Brazil with Lenwood Morris showing a fine classical technique in a costume of ribbons, and *Los Indios* with Wilbert Bradley looking like Harpo Marx while he intrigues two girls, Lucille Ellis and Jacqueline Walcott, with a haunting little air on a pipe; and a brilliant tango from Argentina with Dunham and Vanoye Aikens.

The ballet *L'Ag'ya*, which was one of the great successes when the company was here before, formed the centre of the programme. This story of jealousy in 18th century Martinique does not seem to be so sensational as it used to be, which may partly be on account of over-familiarity. The Zombie scene is still weird and terrifying. Wilbert Bradley as the jilted villain has improved so much as a dancer that the absence of Thommy Gomez is not so noticeable as might be expected. The actual fighting dance itself, in the last scene, is but a pale shadow of its former self.

The last section of the programme consists entirely of the songs and dances of North America—square dances, spirituals, cakewalks, and a Shimmy for Dunham and Aikens that is as witty an evocation of the 'twenties as I can remember.

THE LESSON OF DUNHAM

IT sounds rather dreary to say that there is a lesson to be learnt from a show of this kind, but there is. During the past years we have seen many dance groups from various countries which, though interesting in many ways, failed. The reason they failed was because they never fully realised that the presentation on anything in the theatre is an art. Dunham has never lost sight of this fact and by sheer genius, for it is nothing other, she has turned all her material into something that while retaining its authentic base is—wonderful theatre. In this she has been helped by her husband, John Pratt, who has designed some of the best costumes we have seen for many years. It would have been so easy for it all to be loud and garish, yet it never is at any moment. The programme, the colours, the music, and the dancers, are perfectly balanced. The company deserve the success they are having and everybody remotely interested in the theatre should make an effort to see it. There is a possibility that they will never come to England again.

P. W.

DANCERS OF THE TROPICS

ON January 22, Boscoe Holder opened a "pocket Dunham show" of his own at the Irving Theatre. This was bright and lively though it was the single numbers that were the most successful. The small stage rather cramped any attempts at larger production. The selection of Caribbean songs by Sheila Clarke were charming, as also was a "Ping Pong" solo by Stirling Betancourt. This instrument is an oil-barrel lid and is played with a stick, the beautiful sound it manages to emit is remarkable. This show was a great improvement on the last which Holder gave and if he can continue in this way his company should be a useful addition to the companies already functioning in this country.

CONTINENTAL BALLET

ON December 24, att he Floral Hall, Scarborough, the company gave its first performance of a three act work. This was *Cinderella* with a scenario by Keith Lester and choreography by Molly Lake. The music was taken from various works of Tchaikovsky.

The work retained all the popular features of Christmas pantomime with the accent on comedy. Great prominence was given to the Ugly Sisters, Buttons, The Baron, and the Cat. A modern note was struck by the inclusion of Cinderella's Freudian dream. This shows her meetings with the Prince being continually frustrated by the Ugly Sisters. The intervention of a Fairy Godmother prevents her from developing too many complexes. The work ended with the usual wedding celebration divertissement.

EDINBURGH FESTIVAL

THIS year's festival opens on August 17 and lasts until September 6. Ballet will be well represented and it is certain that New York City Ballet will appear there after their Covent Garden season. The Sadler's Wells Theatre Ballet will represent England and it is hoped that John Cranko will mount a new work specially for the festival. There also seems every chance of the Grand Ballet du Marquis de Cuevas putting in an appearance. To this may be added performances by Ballet Workshop. At the moment neither of the two latter companies are finally fixed.

Dance and Dancers . . . . ABROAD

(*Left*) *Members of the Verde Gaio company in one of their national ballets showing dances from various regions. The two dancers are Ruth Walden and Francis Graca.* (*Right*) *Members of the Ballados du Circolo de Iniciacao Coregrafia in* Arrail nu Ribera *with choreography by de Abreu.*

PORTUGAL

With the Sadler's Wells Ballet going to Portugal in April, it is interesting to know what ballets and companies exist already in that country. Philippe Perrottet, formerly principal dancer with the Ny Norsk company. recently went to Lisbon and here is what he learnt during his visit.

THE principal ballet company in Portugal is the Verde Gaio (or Green Parrot). It is a state company, controlled by the Ministry of Propaganda, and it has its home in the magnificent Teatro San Carlos, which is controlled by the Ministry of Education.

The company was formed by its present Artistic Director, Francis Graca, in order to dance national ballets based on Portuguese national dances. Its first performance was at the Teatro du Trinidad, Lisbon, in 1940, and it was not until 1941 that it opened at its home theatre. The large repertoire consists almost entirely of ballets based on Portuguese folk lore and history, with choreography directly based on the folk dances of the country.

Three years ago Ivo Cramer, the Swedish dancer and choreographer, worked for a time with the company and produced several works in his own highly personal style. During this period the company gave a short season in Paris where it gained a considerable success with its national ballets; the most outstanding being Francis Craca's *Nazare*, a tragedy on life in a fishing village near Lisbon.

The Verde Gaio is now progressing towards a more classical style and two years ago engaged Violette Knalle from the Paris Opera, as classical *etoile* and Ballet Mistress. It has since mounted the Chopin *Suite des danses* from the Opera repertoire.

The other company in Lisbon has the grand sounding name of Ballados do Circolo de Iniciacao Coregrafia, an amateur company with two professional dancers. It was founded by Margarita de Abreu, the present Professor of the Dance at the Lisbon Conservatoire, largely as a protest against the excessively nationalistic outlook of the Verde Gaio. Armed with a manifesto headed, "We uphold Fokine and Helpmann" (surely the first time these names have been linked thus) the company set out to uphold the purely classical ballet. Its first performance was in 1945 with new ballets by de Abreu, followed in the next year by a new version of *Firebird* and a Mozart ballet. Except for the first season which was at the Teatro National du Donna Maria, all the performances have been at the San Carlos. The girls of the *corps de ballet* are now appearing in a musical at the Teatro Monumental, and it is hoped that regular weekly ballet matinees will be given here.

Both companies give their ballets in the grand manner, with sumptuous decor and costumes and the full San Carlos orchestra. In this the Verde Gaio has undoubted *supre ect* having both more money and a very fine artistic Director in Francis Graca, who is also principal dancer and choreographer. He has a great feeling for beauty in the theatre.

The heavy reliance on story, costumes and decor in Portuguese ballet masks the technical deficiencies—compared to the rest of Europe the standard of classical technique is very low. Doubtless this will improve with time as the Ballet Mistresses in both companies are working steadily uphill against enormous difficulties.

It will be interesting to see how the Sadler's Wells visit affects the position and future of Portuguese ballet. It will also be interesting to hear what the company think of the steeply raked stage of the San Carlo, it is one of the steepest in Europe. **P.P.**

FOREIGN NEWS IN BRIEF

THERE now seems every probability of Les Ballets des Champs Elysees reforming and going on a tour of considerable length. At the moment it is not certain who the stars will be.

AMERICAN Ballet Theatre have announced their intention of not coming to Europe this summer as was previously stated. This decision has been made so that the company will not clash with the European tour of New York City Ballet. Ballet Theatre will probably now come to Europe in the autumn.

THE Grand Ballet du Marquis de Cuevas are having a season in Cannes. During which time they are to mount *Inez de Castro* by Ana Ricarda and *La Belle Epoque* by David Lichine. After the Cannes season the company will tour Belgium, Holland and Scandinavia. Later they may go to South America.

LES BALLETS JANINE CHARRAT, a group of fifteen dancers, opened at Grenoble on December 24. Early in the New Year, the company appeared in Cannes and later in January they opened at the Theatre de L'Empire in Paris. The principal dancers are Charrat herself, Ethery Pagava, Milorad Miskovtich, Rene Bon, Vladimir Oukhtomsky, Claire Sombert, Daniel Arensky, and Michel Volinoff. The repertoire, mainly of a concert nature, consists of works by Charrat.

THE Paris Opéra will stage several works by the famous Ballet Master from Copenhagen Harald Lander. Also scheduled is a new work by Serge Lifar based on Moliere's *Fourberies de Scapin.*

ROLAND PETIT was in Paris in early January. This being the first visit since 1950. He was reported to have met Margot Fonteyn for discussions about a new ballet he is to create for her at Covent Garden later in the year.

Television

IT would seem an odd choice to present a ballet intended for the vast spaces of the Imperial Russian Theatres in the confines of the television screen, but this is just what Cyril Beaumont and Mary Skeaping attempted in presenting *The Sleeping Princess* on January 11. The result was a pretty compromise between Petipa's ballet and the fairy tale of Charles Perrault, capturing neither the grandeur of the former nor the magic of the latter. Nevertheless, the production was not without moments of beauty, thanks to the imaginative production of Christian Simpson whose cameras might have been the work of the Lilac Fairy's wand, and to Lotte Reiniger's silhouettes and cut-outs, which would have done honour to any book of fairy-tales. The wiry tails of Carabosse's mice scuttling in and out of the palace, and the Lilac Fairy and the Prince embarking on their journey to the sleep-bound castle, were particularly effective.

The compromising nature of the production might have left Lycette Darsonval in some doubt as to the most suitable interpretation of Aurora. The only emotion she produced was a rather heavy coyness. Her hops on and off point made for jerky dancing though she turned easily and her jumps were high and clean.

The best dancing performance came from Xavier Andreani (also of the Paris Opera) who danced Bluebird with strength and style. His movements were large but always well-controlled and he gave the impression of ease and grace without ever seeming effeminate.

It was a great pleasure to see Harold Turner again as exemplary cavalier partnering Darsonval, also June Brae as a warm and comforting Lilac Fairy. Michel de Lutry (looking uncomfortably like Claudette Colbert) was sufficiently wicked as Carabosse, while Frank Staff and Leilia Russell made a handsome and dignified King and Queen.

Let us hope that the producers will soon give us another example of their art while, at the same time, keeping more within bounds of the limited space. **Jeffrey Solomons**

Clubs

SOUTHAMPTON

Southampton Ballet Club. Sec.: Mr. G. R. Turner, 35 The Avenue, Southampton, Tel.: 4465.

IN the first year the club has attracted 135 members to become one of the largest in the country. The programmes have been worked out with "ballet education" in mind. The Mayor of Southampton Mrs. M. Cutler cut the first birthday cake at a special tea on January 13 with a Leichner make-up demonstration following. On February 3 Madame Elsa Brunelleschi gave a talk on Spanish Dancing.

March 2 in University College Assembly Hall, Portswood, at 3 p.m. Miss Margaret Graham, of the Sadler's Wells School will talk on "Ballet in Turkey".

NEWCASTLE

Newcastle-upon-Tyne Ballet Club. Sec.: Miss Winifred Patterson, Benwell Grange, Newcastle, 5. *Tel.:* 33152.

ON Sunday, February 24, there will be a meeting to arrange items for the Club show, which will take place at Kinnaird Hall, on Sunday, March 9.

New members are welcome and details may be had from the Secretary. Clubroom is open every Thursday from 7-9.30 p.m., at 25 Graham Park Road, Gosforth.

LEWISHAM

Lewisham Ballet Theatre Club. Sec.: Miss M. S. Childs, 47 *Allenswood Road, Eltham, London, S.E.*9. *Tel.: Eltham* 7407.

THE following lecturers have agreed to address the club at Lewisham Town Hall, Catford, S.E.6. The fee will be one shilling and members of other clubs will be welcome.

Feb. 20. Peter Franklyn-White. March 5. John Hall. March 19. Alfred Rodrigues. On April 2 there will be a film show.

CROSSWORD SOLUTION

BEGINNERS

Across. 6, Donald. 7, Legs. 8, Inge. 9, Urgent. 11, Robe. 13, Crush. 15, Enter. 17, Lime. 19, A prism. 21, Role. 23, plot. 24, Leeder.

Down. 1, John. 2, Waters. 3, A daub. 4, Flag. 5, A Genie. 10, Reel. 12, O.H.M.S. 14, Ripple. 16, Nerves. 18, Imply. 20, Into. 22, Lieu.

VETERANS

Across. 6, Margot. 7, Blue. 8, Hero. 9, Fleshy. 11, Sofa. 13, Truth. 15, Scamp. 17, Nash. 19, Hinton. 21, Oath. 23, Lean. 24, Trumps.

Down. 1, Tale. 2, A ghost. 3, Staff. 4, Able. 5, Dunham. 6, Lass. 12, Oh no. 14, Ruined. 16, Chorus. 18, Anita. 20, Toni. 22, Taps.

Ballet Dates

SADLER'S WELLS BALLET AT COVENT GARDEN

February
14 *Donald of the Burthens, Daphnis and Chloe, Mam'zelle Angot*
15 *Mam'zelle Angot, Don Quixote, Ballet Imperial*
16 *Les Sylphides, Daphnis and Chloe, Donald of the Burthens*
19 *Mam'zelle Angot, Tiresias, Donald of the Burthens*
23 (M) *Coppelia* (Nerina, Rassine, Jackson, Lindsay)
(E) *Les Sylphides, Tiresias, Donald of the Burthens*
25 *Les Patineurs, Tiresias, Daphnis and Chloe.*
26 *Les Sylphides, Tiresias, Mam'zelle Angot.*
27 *Les Patineurs, Three Cornered Hat, Ballet Imperial.*
28 *Les Patineurs, Three Cornered Hat, Mam'zelle Angot.*
March
1 (M) *Les Sylphides, Mam'zelle Angot, Tiresias.*
(E) *Les Sylphides, Tiresias, Ballet Imperial.*
3 *Les Sylphides, Symphonic Variations, Three Cornered Hat.*
4 *Ballet Imperial, A Mirror for Witches (first performance), Three Cornered Hat.*
5 *Les Patineurs, A Mirror for Witches, Daphnis and Chloe.*
6 *Ballet Imperial, A Mirror for Witches, Mam'zelle Angot.*
7 *Les Patineurs, A Mirror for Witches, Daphnis and Chloe.*
8 (M) *Les Sylphides, Three Cornered Hat, Symphonic Variations.*
(E) *Mam'zelle Angot, Symphonic Variations, Three Cornered Hat.*
10 *Les Sylphides, Tiresias, Symphonic Variations.*

SADLER'S WELLS THEATRE BALLET IN AMERICA

February
25 Capitol Theatre, Washington (three days)
28 Academy of Music, Philadelphia (three days)
March
3 Syria Mosque, Pittsburgh (two days)
5 City Auditorium, Columbus (one day)
6 Paramount Theatre, Toledo (one day)
7 Music Hall, Cincinnati (two days)

RAMBERT BALLET

February
11 Pavilion, Torquay
18 Theatre Royal, Bristol (two weeks)
March
10 White Rock Pavilion, Hastings
17 Hippodrome, Derby
24 Festival Theatre, Malvern

FESTIVAL BALLET

February
11 Theatre Royal, Belfast (two weeks)
25 Gaiety Theatre, Dublin (two weeks)
March
10 Hippodrome, Bristol
17 Gaumont, Southampton
24 Cardiff (two weeks)
April
7 Manchester
14 Hull

CONTINENTAL BALLET

February
18 Theatre Royal, Norwich

INTERNATIONAL BALLET

February
11 Regal Theatre, Edmonton
18 Granada Theatre, Woolwich
27(Wednesday) De Montfort Hall, Leicester (two weeks)
March
10 Grand Theatre, Wolverhampton

PAVINOFF BALLET

February
11 The New Theatre, Cambridge

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(Abbreviations: b.c.—ballet correspondence; m.—male; f.—female; m.a.—my age; o.i.—other interests; l.s.—languages; p.r.—photograph requested.)

JOSEPHINE BOWKETT, 34, Victoria Road, Harborne, Birmingham, 17, wants b.c., m. or f. in England, U.S.A., Australia, France, age 12-15. m.a. 13. o.i., riding, athletics, reading. p.r., all answered.

VALERIE LINCOLN, 36, Wheatlands Drive, Heaton, Bradford, wants b.c., m. age 12-14, in U.S.A., Bermuda, m.a. 12. o.i. ballet music, art, swimming, animals.

DOREEN PLANT, 8, Myrtle Grove, Droylsden, nr. Manchester, wants b.c., m. or f. 16-20, all over the world. m.a. 18, o.i. reading, tennis, swimming, films, all answered.

GRETA BAILEY, Gloucester Lodge, Broad Lane, Hampton, Middlesex, wants b.c. in Scandinavia, Italy, Spain, S. America, and Holland. m.a. 17. o.i. sports, films, and music.

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MICHAEL MALYCHA, 110, Park Terrace, Wayville, South Australia, wants b.c. 20-25, England or Scandinavia m.a. 24, Pianoforte student, o.i. sketching, reading.

NITA GEGG, 71, Kipling Road, Eastleigh, Hants, wants b.c., f. 15-17 in U.S.A., Canada, Australia, Switzerland. m.a. 15. o.i. sport, reading, any dancing .p.r.

BERNARD HARRISON, 59, Freshfield Road, Brighton, 7., wants b.c., m. age 15-21, in Europe, America, Britain. m.a. 20. o.i. Music, theatre, camping. p.r. all answered.

BARBARA ALKER, 278, Allerton Road, Liverpool, 18, wants b.c., m. or f., age 17-21, England, U.S.A., Europe. m.a. 18. o.i. music, art, theatre, modern poetry.

ROY LUCK, 44, Shannon Avenue, Toronto, Canada, wants b.c., m. age 20 or over, anywhere. m.a. 24, o.i. music, art, nature, sport. p.r., all answered.

YVONNE NICOLLE, 21, Humberstone Road, Cambridge, wants b.c., m. or f., in Scandinavia, France. m.a. 16. o.i., music, art, classical literature.

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JANETTE BOWMAN, 3, Backmarch Road, Rosyth, Fife, Scotland, wants b.c., m. or f., over 19. America, Canada, Paris, anywhere. o.i. music, films, books, sport, youth work. p.r.

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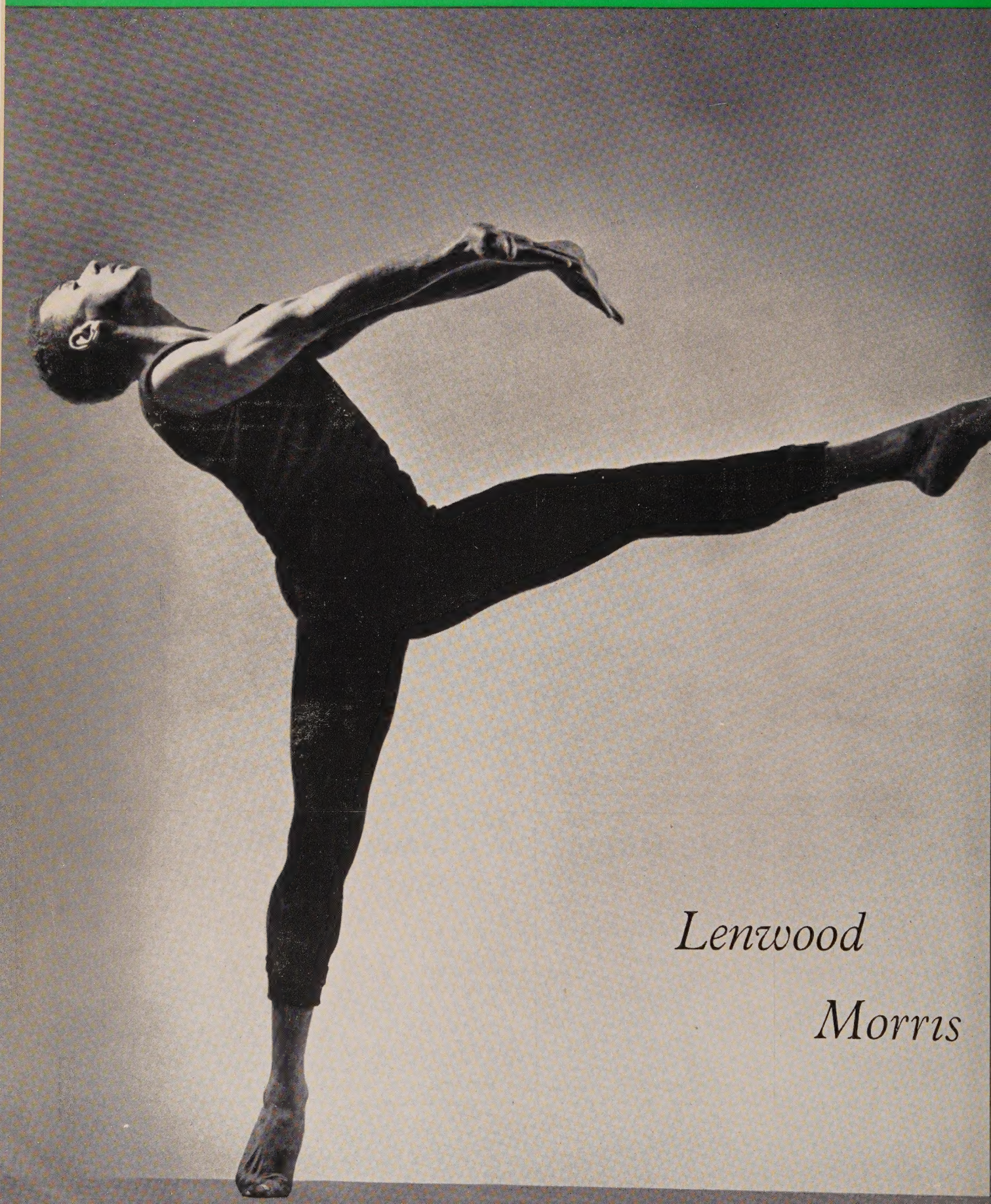

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